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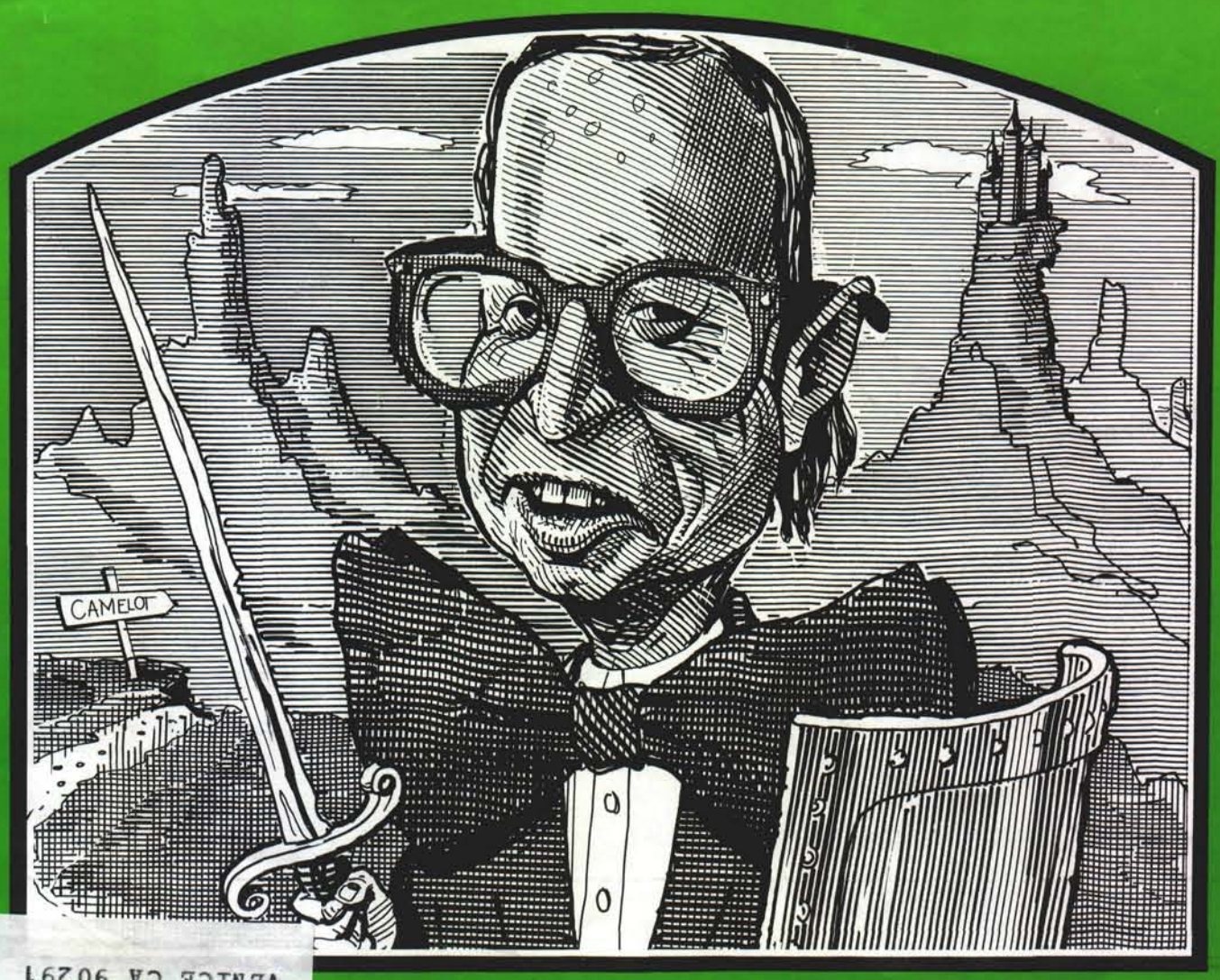

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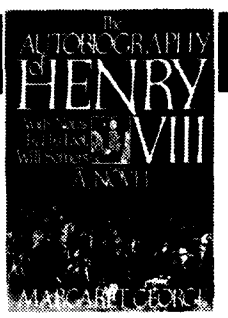

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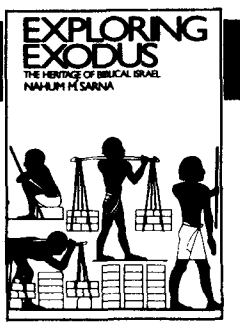

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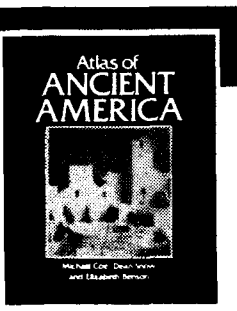

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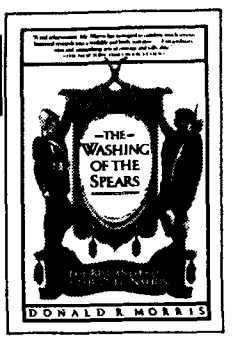

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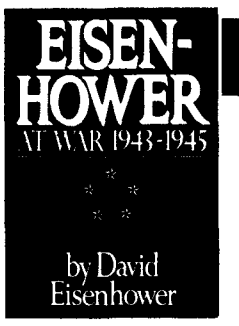

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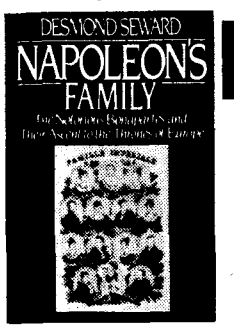

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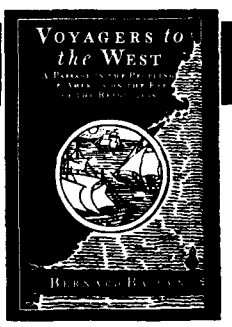

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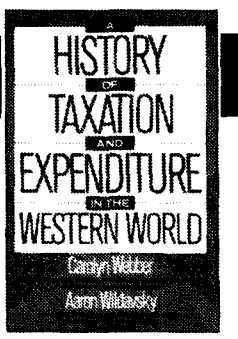

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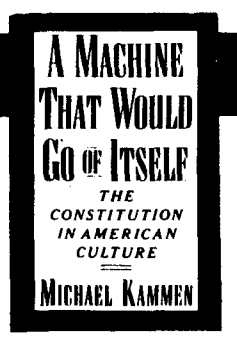

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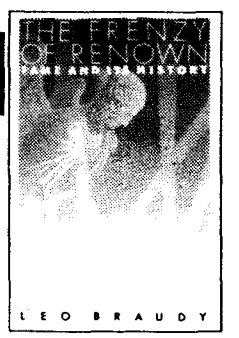

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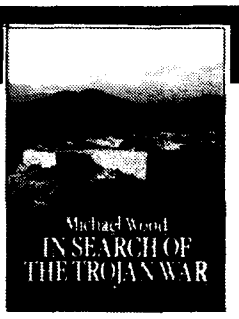

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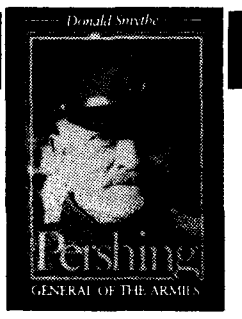

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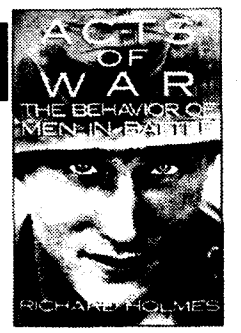

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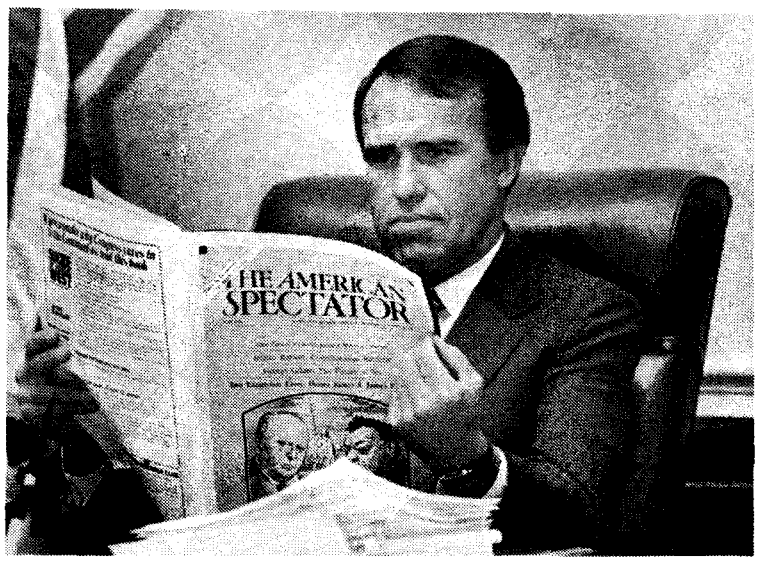

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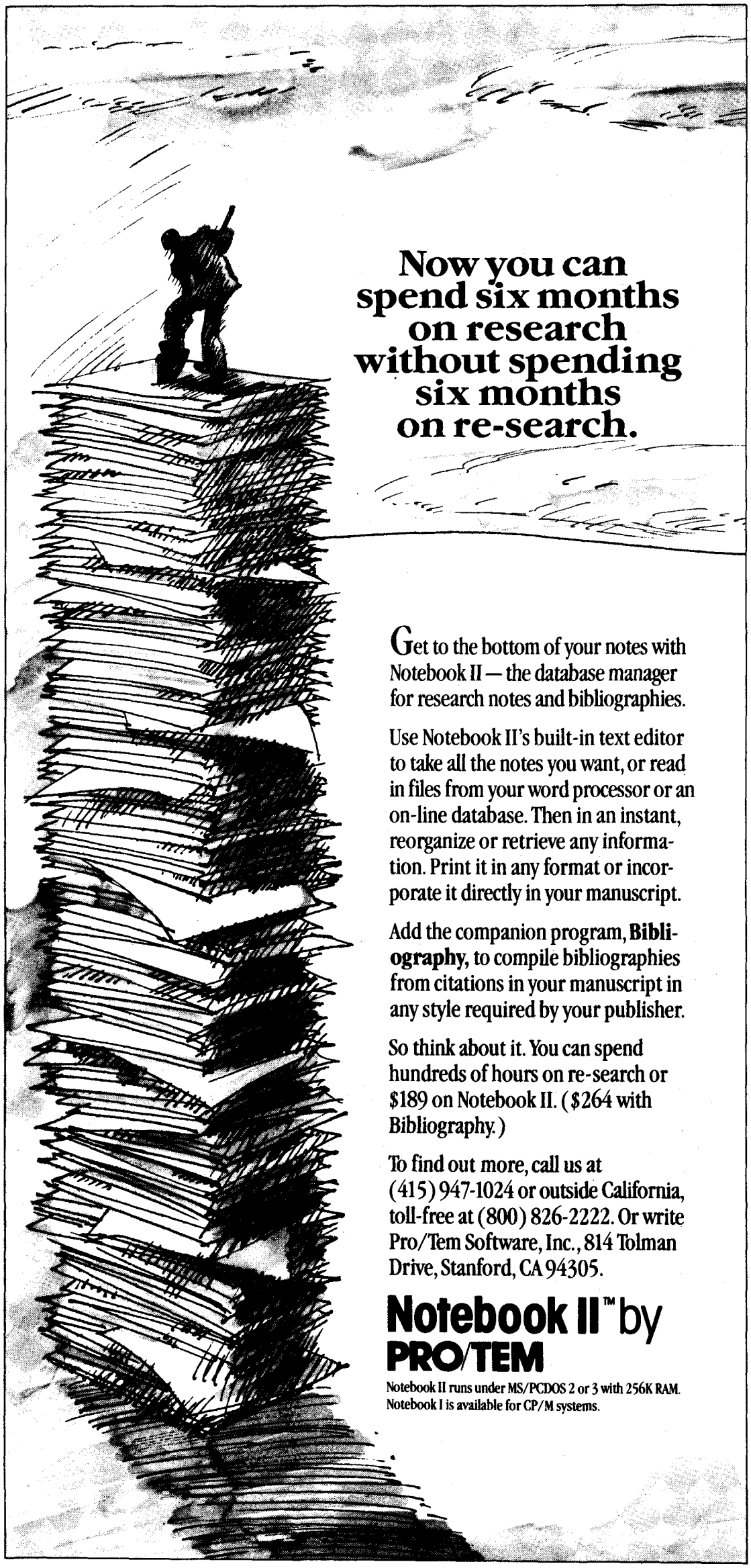
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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•Just as the 1986 hurricane season was going down in the record books as one of the quietest ever, Washington was hit by gusts of hot air the likes of which have not been seen since Nixonian times. All had been quiet in our Nation's Capital. The President was riding at the peak of his popularity, and then it hit: Contragate or Iragua or Irangate or Irancontragate. Throughout December and into January no one knew quite what to call the disturbance, and its elements were so elusive that every discussion of it verged on the incomprehensible. Nonetheless, soon the President lost twenty popularity points. The most curious aspect of the furor was how rapidly the President found himself deserted even by conservatives. What did it all mean? The valiant Patrick J. Buchanan singlehandedly and without White House support challenged Republicans and conservatives to stand by the President. "Why," he asked, "don't conservatives retrieve their wounded?" A deeper question and a new one that all conservatives might ask is, Why do they have so many wounded in the first place?

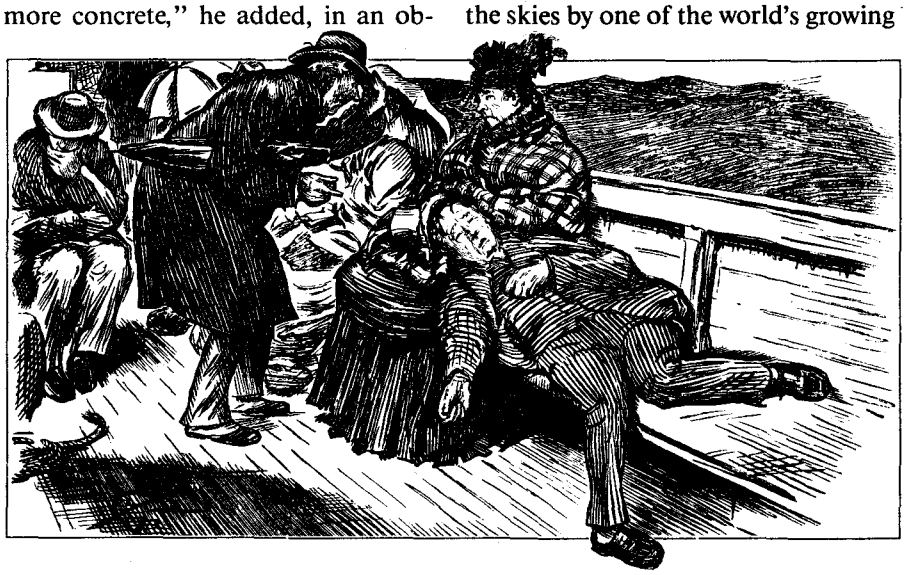
•For the first time in 135 years a New York Yacht Club boat will not sail in an America's Cup final. The Club's entry, *America II*, lost to the *New Zealand* in a match race on December 14—a kinder fate than what Italy's team suffered. The New Yorkers were outwitted by antipodeans; the Italians were befoozled by an actual kangaroo. According to the infallible *Tucson Citizen*, the idiotic Italians encountered the kangaroo lying unconscious by a rural roadside and were quick to perceive the commercial benefit in photographing the beast attired in their team jacket. Unfortunately, they dressed the kangaroo in a jacket containing the keys to their car, and when the saltant beast abruptly came to and lit out for the bush the Italians were left with an arduous walk back to civilization.

•In progressive Zimbabwe crop guards shot a sleeping colleague after mistaking his snores for the grunts of a wild pig. The guard was treated at a local animal clinic and released. Aspiring Casanovas throughout the great state of Ohio let out a yell when the Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Sexuality and Pregnancy announced plans to have school districts identify young people who are "at risk" of becoming pregnant so that the frolicsome young ladies "can be aided with special programs." Miss Linda Feldman, a resident of Manhattan's West Side, has filed a $90 million lawsuit against Mr. Tony Bennett, claiming that she "sustained serious bodily injuries with accompanying pain and emotional distress" during a seven-month love affair with the sixty-year-old singer. According to Miss Feldman, Mr. Bennett infected her with herpes against her wishes.

•The Soviets freed Mr. Andrei Sakharov from his seven-year "internal exile" in foul Gorky, a metropolis not unlike Gary, Indiana; and in Sacramento, California, the Animal Liberation Front mounted a covert operation to free 127 turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) from two nearby turkey ecumenes. The Front is a secret organization devoted to the principle that "meat is murder" and that the Bill of Rights applies equally to fauna as to Mr. Yves St. Laurent, Mr. Jerome Zipkin, the Hogarth Beards of Cocoa Beach, Florida/Greenwich, Connecticut, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Mr. Sam Hall, the neoconservative brother of Democratic Congressman Tony Hall, was arrested in a Nicaraguan taxi in a Nicaraguan military base in Nicaragua; but the Sandinistas did release Mr. Eugene Hasenfus from one of their model prisons into the hands of one of their model American senators, the Hon. Christabel Dodd. "This is our Christmas and New Year's message to the American people," sang Sandinista strongman Sr. Daniel Ortega. "It is a message of peace, and couldn't be more concrete," he added, in an obvious reference to Mr. Hasenfus's head.

•In Sydney, Australia, a chilling outburst of intolerance forced Australian sportsmen to cancel a forthcoming international dwarf-throwing contest between Australia and Great Britain. There were even death threats! In San Antonio, Texas, Representative Henry B. Gonzalez, the conscience of Texas's congressional delegation, punched a man whom he thought he overheard calling him a Communist, though the man could have been calling him a Comedian or a Comestible—the Hon. Gonzalez is getting on in years. In Slidell, Louisiana, Mr. Alfred K. Uhry, Jr., a First Amendment absolutist, was again arrested for making obscene telephone calls, and in Washington, D.C., Mr. James H. Wentzel, president of the Legal Services Corporation, resigned after published reports that he had been apprehended for allegedly shoplifting $5.66 worth of snack cakes, ham, and canned vegetables. The federal government's Commission on Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Salaries advised raising some government salaries by up to 80 percent.

•Congressman James Wright of Texas became Speaker of the House and promptly called for a tax increase. A disgruntled customer at the Corner Lounge diner in Jackson, Mississippi, shot and killed a short-order cook, Mr. Percy Lee Jones, when Mr. Jones refused to serve the customer, Mr. Willie B. Hamilton, chicken on Christmas Eve. Mr. Dick Rutan and Miss Jeana Yeager risked all to fly their twin-engined and twin-tailed aeroplane, *Voyager*, 23,000 miles around the world without refueling or being blasted from the skies by one of the world's growing number of pests. Actually, saying that *Voyager* flew "around" the earth may not be quite accurate, for Mr. Charles H. Johnson of the Flat Earth Research Society International was quick to note that the Earth is not a globe but rather a platter. *Voyager* flew around the outer rim of the platter; anyone who claims that the plane flew around a globe is, in Mr. Johnson's words, "a pathological liar, and you can quote me on that."



•In freedom-loving Bangui, Central African Republic, the Hon. Jean-Bedel Bokassa, formerly Emperor Bokassa I, went on trial on charges of murder and cannibalism, the usual complaints. This journal's recommendation that the Reagan Administration might better fund the contras through a series of charitable balls paid for by the country's social strivers rather than rely on a majority of infinitely flightier congressmen has been co-opted by Mr. Jeff Nightbyrd of Houston, Texas. Mr. Nightbyrd, whose company markets pure urine to people facing drug tests, held a Urine Ball to raise legal defense monies. The Ball had the active support of the legal director for the Texas Civil Liberties Union, Mr. Jim Herrington, an accomplished ballroom dancer. There were student riots in Peking and Shanghai, and the *Lanzhou Evening News* reported that a bridegroom in Northeast China kissed his wife so passionately on the neck that she immediately assumed room temperature for good.

•The *New York Post* reported on December 11 that Miss Kate Smith remained unburied, though she expired six months ago. Mr. Marquette Frye, known to history as the man who began the 1965 Watts riots, died of natural causes. He was 42. Miss Dorothy Molter, dubbed by the *Saturday Evening Post* as "the loneliest woman in America," died at her home on Minnesota's Knife Lake, alone. Mr. Dumas Malone, the author of interminable histories of Thomas Jefferson, died at the age of 94; and Miss Marjorie Husted, champion of "good housekeeping" and promoter of Betty Crocker, also shook her mortal coil. She too was 94. Finally, Mr. R. Gordon Wasson, the mushroom expert, died at the age of 88. Among his immortal works are *Mushrooms, Russia*

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and History and *The Wondrous Mushroom: Mycolatry in Mesoamerica.* Both remain in hardbound.

•The joyous Christmas season once again brought out the best in people. In Fresno, California, complaints from two strict constructionists caused city officials to remove from city buses the Salvation Army's seasonal slogan "Sharing is Caring—God Bless You." In Jackson, Mississippi, home of Mr. Willie B. Hamilton at least until more suitable surroundings can be found, Federal Judge William H. Barbour, Jr. ordered that a lighted cross be removed from a state building. In Newark, New Jersey, the Rev. Romano Ferraro, a progressive Catholic, notified his flock at a December 6 mass that Santa Claus was dead, setting off wails throughout the church. And a volunteer Santa Claus was shot on Christmas Eve in a New Mexico state penitentiary. It was an accident. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Latin Lover

Saluto R. Emmett,
Scortaris te.
Vale,

—Madonna
New York City

R. Elmer Tyrrell, Jr. replies:
Doubtless had you in your youth the benefit of a competent Latin instructor you would not now be displaying difficulty with that intransitive that appears in your otherwise admirably concise note.

Your longing for excitement and for both moral and intellectual improvement are perfectly understandable, but I shun the outdoors. Furthermore I am somewhat a hypochondriac and today's headlines only confirm me in my sense of alarm.

Getting Lou's Gloat

In light of more recent events, it appears Tom Bethell's gloating over the effects of Reykjavik on "poor old Lou Cannon" was just a bit premature ("Cross Currents," *TAS*, December 1986). Mr. Cannon, quite probably, will have the last gloat.

Furthermore, it hurts me to say that I think the brunt of responsibility (and blame) for this awful turn of events should fall squarely on the weary shoulders of the man who served us so well in Iceland.

—Ken Bashford
Bangor, Maine

Decide Now

After reading Gregory Fossedal's outstanding article ("SDI and History," *TAS*, December 1986), which rather convincingly urges President Reagan to display the courage to act strongly in regard to the deployment of SDI, I thought of a more appropriate summarizing quotation from Richard Nixon.

In 1952, when General Eisenhower had been bogged down with the "recommendations" of advisers in regard to whether he should request that Senator Nixon resign from the 1952 Republican ticket, he did not advocate a strong position either way. Eisenhower's inability to commit himself one way or the other became too much for Vice-Presidential nominee Nixon. Pushed to his limit, Nixon confronted Eisenhower and said, "General, . . . there comes a time in matters like this when you've either got to shit or get off the pot. The great trouble here is the indecision."

Nixon's words hold great value today. Kudos to Mr. Fossedal for pointing out the immediate need for Reagan to assemble a cohesive body of SDI advisers. A stronger voice from the top and a greater perception of unity is definitely needed in this policy area.

—Hollis M. Greenlaw
Fairfield, Maine

Conservative Trends

Chester E. Finn, Jr. is correct when he says that the conservative movement is in danger of disintegrating "into factions and fractions and internal interest groups" ("Giving Shape to Cultural Conservatism," *TAS*, November 1986). He also correctly calls for "a set of principles or body of doctrine to which most conservatives can subscribe." The point he misses is that this set of principles must be short, concise, and easily understood.

His ten candidates for core tenets are an incomprehensible amalgam of bureaucratic clichés. The eyes of a normal person quickly glaze over while reading this pile of pompous pamphleteering.

I would like to suggest three basic principles that I think most conservatives could agree on and even non-bureaucrats could understand. These principles are individual freedom, a strong defense, and a sound economy.

A slogan like that has all the ingredients for political success. It's short, easily remembered, and embodies the essence of the conservative viewpoint.

These "tenets" would give conservatives a real chance at the much needed political realignment of our country. Success, however, would require that the various factions stop equivocating and live up to their beliefs.

When forced to choose, we must always choose principle over our own narrow self-interests, or we will forever remain in the minority.

—Dave Kunkel
Santa Clara, California

Among the ten tenets of cultural conservatism presented by Chester E. Finn, Jr., his fourth tenet glorifying democracy should be dropped. Finn's first three and last two tenets deal with restrictions on individual behavior, numbers five through eight with restrictions on government. However, modern democracy with its one-person, one-vote popular sovereignty is powerfully inclined to undermine all such restrictions.

Finn traces the values of a conservative culture from Greece and Rome through the history of Western civilization and the Judeo-Christian tradition. For better than ninety percent of this period, democracy played no part. The authoritarian rule of monarchs, emperors, and theocrats vied with that of aristocratic and republican oligarchies. Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides; St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas; Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and Bach; Bodin, Hobbes, and Burke all made their contributions without the "benefit" of a democratic culture. The American Founding Fathers favored a mixed system of representative government with the indirect election of President and Senate, a written Constitution difficult to alter, and a non-elected judiciary. The principle of a limited franchise was maintained. Participation in government was something to be earned by doing more than just breathing. And the duties of citizenship meant more than self-interest.

The democratic ideology has its roots in leftist politics and has been associated with cultural decline. Russell Kirk listed the factors that contributed to the sudden "generally catastrophic" triumph of democracy as "Paine and Rousseau, a cheap press, general confidence that legislation could establish universal happiness, the insurrectionary power which urban masses possessed throughout the nineteenth century, loss of social ascendancy by the old superior classes, substitution of individual for community feeling." The common factor in all of these is the concept of equality: the political, economic, and social equality of all persons as autonomous individuals, the moral equality of all actions, the artistic equality of all forms of expression. The extent to which equality is to shape society, culture, and the state is the decisive criterion between right and left. Conservative standards create a hierarchy of values against which individual behavior is measured. It is the essence of civilization. Democracy is based on a contradictory premise that leads to leveling and anarchy.

Aristotle warned that those who attain political equality will attempt to use their numbers to attain equality in all other areas. He was speaking primarily of economic redistribution, which abounds today in all democracies, but the "gay rights" movement is another example of trading votes for an equality of moral "respect." A democrat has no reason to object to this, but a conservative does.

The U.S. is a democracy and conservatives must work within it. However, democracy merely defines the political arena within which elites battle for the power to advance their agendas. Democracy is not itself one of the values for which conservatives enter the arena to contend. It was a theme of James Burnham (back in the days when political thinking took deeper and more serious forms) that "no societies are governed by the people, by a majority; all societies, including those called democratic, are ruled by a minority." José Ortega y Gasset argued that a society "is a society in the measure that it is aristocratic, and ceases to be such as it ceases to be aristocratic." The question is which elite, embodying what set of values, will rule?

Democracy is not a necessary condition for cultural conservatism, nor will it by nature advance conservatism. On the contrary, democracy can only work if conservative values are so deeply ingrained that they will guide the majority in a responsible exercise of its power. That seems to be what Finn is really aiming at. But for this condition to hold over time, most of the institutions upon which Finn depends to promote his tenets will have to be placed outside the reach of democratic tampering. The fact that conservative bastions have not been so protected in the past explains why our national culture is in the sad shape that it is.

(continued on page 48)

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Are Two Different Visions Tearing Our World Apart?

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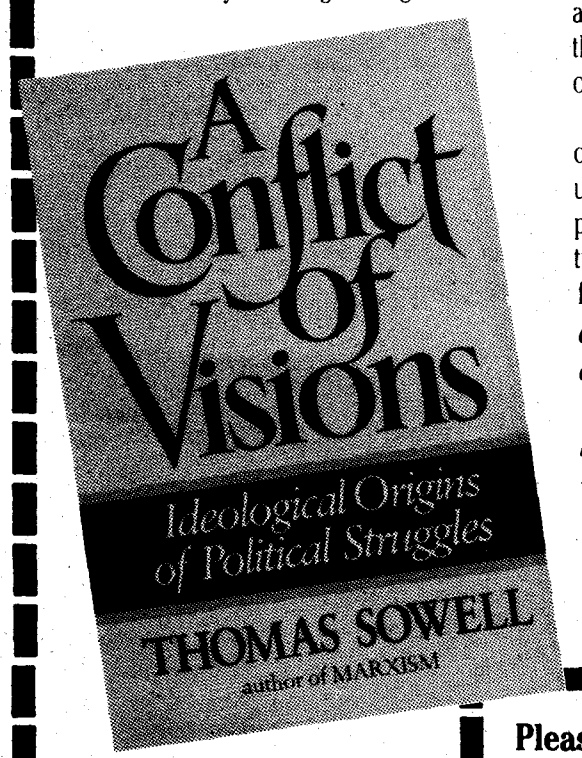

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EDITORIALS

ENTER OLD BLUNDERBUSS

by R. Elmer Tyrrell, Jr.

As recent events demonstrate anew, the major business in Washington is politics not government, and the preeminent question asked of any political decision here is how will it play, not how will it affect government.

Hence, around the name Frank C. Carlucci now spin speculations as to the cosmetics of his appointment rather than the substance. How will this new White House decoration affect the President's guns-for-hostages imbroglio or whatever the controversy is being called? Incidentally, it is suggestive of the controversy's amorphous condition that none of Washington's resident poets has come up with an adequate name for it. In fact, the leading combatants have not yet settled on what they are so burnt up about: Laws breached? Which laws? Money diverted? Whose money? The defrauding of anti-American Iranians? The funding of pro-American contras? The freeing of hostages? In weeks past that goal was of the utmost urgency. Now it is forgotten.

Essentially, what the President did to soil his shoes so catastrophically was breach his own injunction against dealing with terrorism's patrons and his own embargo against selling arms to Iran. Then he refused to acknowledge the mistakes. He dissembled and grew aloof. Finally he allowed the faithful Ed Meese to announce that an investigation was underway before anyone was all that certain as to what was being investigated. Now from this bouillabaisse of blunders the Administration has confected a vast political scandal and its friends are asking how long will it last. Its enemies ask how long *can* it last. All Washington is posturing for political advantage as though serious matters of national interest were not at stake, for instance, peace in the Middle East and Central America.

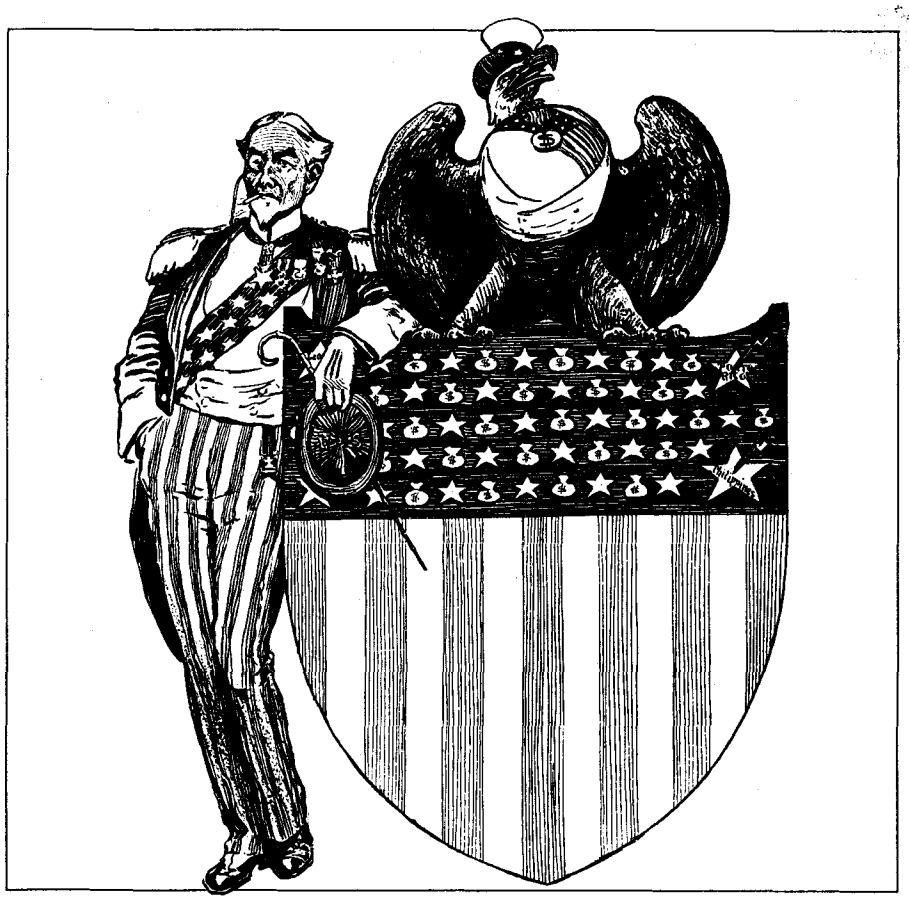
The most florid example of this posturing was recently delivered up by the Democrats' inimitable Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Old Blunderbuss, who with stupefying gasconade lamented, "Your Presidency is tottering, sir," and then he huffed and puffed to make it totter more. The Democrats brought Old Blunderbuss into the limelight because he always puts on a good show, and that belief in show is characteristic of this town's sense of politics. After all, for six years the Reagan Administration's successes have been attributed not to good government through wise policies but to the President's showmanship, and, for the scientifically minded, his teflon coating.

With increasing frequency the President has surrounded himself with aides who believe not in the substance of politics but in the cosmetics of politics: How will a presidential decision appear on the evening news and how will it affect the President's standing in the polls? Unfortunately, as one of Washington's most perceptive observers, Vic Gold, is wont to exclaim, "Those Presidents who live by the polls die by the polls." Those bright boys around the President who once cited his lofty standing in the polls as proof that they were touched by genius must now admit their error.

All who contributed to the President's recent series of botches must go. Anyone who advises the President to replace them with cosmetic appointments rather than appointments of substance must exit also. The Administration had been losing steam long before these recent revelations. Fortunately there is a younger generation of government officials who have demonstrated their vigor and intelligence.

One of the unreported stories about Ronald Reagan's conservatives is that they are facing a generation gap. There is a surprisingly gifted generation of conservatives in their late thirties and forties whose advancement is consciously or unconsciously being resisted by a generation in its sixties. The younger generation should be welcomed into the Administration's inner circles. Over the next two years Ronald Reagan can preserve his presidency and benefit the government by turning to persons of intellect and vitality such as Kenneth Adelman, Elliott Abrams, Bill Bennett, Pat Buchanan, John Lehman, and Richard Perle. These individuals have already served the government well. They should be brought closer to the President that they might serve the government better. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*



CONTRA BALLS

New York

Republican Washington's present gloom has driven me to Mayor Koch's apple, a city long ago cleansed spotless by the earnest brushes of generations of reform Democrats. Here in comfortable digs I can better meditate on the latest twists in Washington's scandal once I have paid off a sufficient number of city inspectors, and double-bolted the armor-plated door protecting me from local thugs.

Down in Washington the Republicans' mood is grim. They pray for a bold stroke from the White House. Unfortunately, there is apparently no one in the White House capable of the requisite stroke. In his second term a President is often left with his party's second stringers, the first stringers having retired to the private sector or to other government service months before. What is more, Fred Barnes of the *New Republic* argues that this President has nothing left on his agenda that will distract us from the present Washington furor. Hence Republicans despair.

Actually, there is a leftover on the President's agenda that, if handled imaginatively, could liberate him from his domestic imbroglio and serve Ameri-

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can strategic interests: to wit, contra aid. Further military aid to anti-Communist forces in Nicaragua, we are told, now faces an uncertain future; and the second-stringers attending the President are impotent to help. Yet the President can preserve contra aid and in doing so divert his critics from their ghoulish absorption with his woes if he grasps the new constellation of power in America and takes dramatic action.

A great leader makes do with conditions as he finds them. Lincoln was without competent generals but he recognized the talent of Grant, drunk or sober. Roosevelt was bound hand and foot by short-sighted neutrality acts, but he had the wit to circumvent them and prepare the Republic for the inevitable. President Reagan's habit has been to remain curiously remote. He looks for no Grants and has no Harry Hopkinses at his side. He does, however, have Nancy; and an astute reading of the changes that have taken place in America in the 1980s suggests that Nancy and her friends might now be more useful in governing the Republic than all the generals and political advisers known to history.

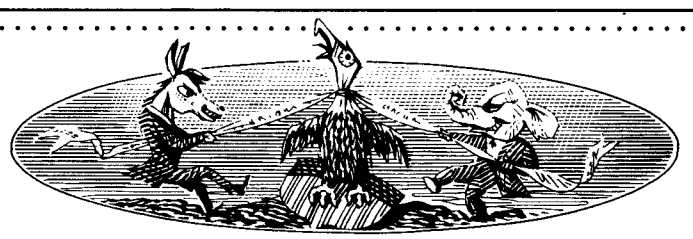
Nancy knows Jerry Zipkin. Jerry knows Nan, and they all go to parties with Oscar, and Swifty, and Yves. These parties attract more adulatory press here in New York than indictments of shifty city officials, or the conviction of the neighborhood rapist. The elegant revels of America's social strivers are increasingly the stuff of media celebrations nationwide. The parties can be gaudy beyond the dreams of Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa, now defunct. The quips from the gaudy guests can be as tedious as Mikhail Gorbachev's remarks to a troop of record-setting Soviet milkmaids. Nonetheless, our stalwart press is thrilled. The President should seize the moment and have Nancy and her friends begin a series of glittering charity balls to fund the freedom fighters of Central America.

The press, you will remember, was not perturbed when it thought contra funding was coming from charitable donations of right-wing fat cats. It surely will not protest if the contras are funded by parties populated by Valentino, Thea Porter, Bill Blass, and those marvels who wear their stuff. After all, Barbara Walters will be there and Bill Paley, and the intriguing Lady Lever. Nocturnal fund-raising, properly understood, will enchant a potentially hostile press and even a few isolationists on Capitol Hill. Jungle fatigues can be worn, and a party of Miskito Indians should be on hand for verisimilitude. The gossip columnists will anesthetize all who doubt. In the 1980s who wants to offend a gossip columnist?

Critics might protest that charitable giving to a war effort is anti-social, but the same can be said for supporting New York's Museum of Modern Art. There might be objections that those who dance ought also to fight, but how many of those who attend benefits for the New York Public Library can read or write?

The President can quiet his enemies and assure support and possibly even affection for the contras by allowing Nancy to auspicate charitable balls on their behalf. Call this frivolous if you will, but we live in a world where Bianca Jagger has solemnly testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. She is against contra aid. My only fear is that Bianca will get wind of my suggestion and her pro-Sandinista charitable balls could raise more money. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



BONN MOTS

by Tom Bethell

Rounding out a peripatetic year, I set off again on my travels in December, this time to West Germany, courtesy of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which is government funded and affiliated with Helmut Kohl's CDU party. A small group of journalists was invited for a six-day fact-finding tour of the Federal Republic. Arnold Beichman, you can be sure, was among the select company. He and I took off from San Francisco airport as seasoned travelers, conscientiously about our business on yet another tour of inspection, with hardly a trace of world-weariness. Arnold had his usual window seat. At luncheon he deftly extracted an extra bottle of wine from the stewardess.

The letter of invitation promised an opportunity "to personally experience the political discussion in Germany on the eve of the upcoming national elections." Here, then, was a challenge to our potentially flagging enthusiasm for new adventures in remote parts of the globe. Let's see if we can't at least simplify the political discussion: the CDU is connected to the . . . CSU, which is connected to the . . . FDP, which is not connected to the . . . SPD, which is opposed to the . . . SDI. I won't bore you with the details, plentifully available elsewhere. Kohl is supposed to win.

I was unable to perform my normal pre-landing aerial reconnaissance because we landed (at Frankfurt) in thick fog, much to the amazement of Beichman, a licensed pilot, who said he had never seen anything like it. Nor had I. (A week later I sat next to a Pan Am pilot, as it happened, and he said that such landings were child's play with modern instruments. He could teach me to fly a Boeing 747 "in half an hour," he said.)

Frankfurt was gray inside the terminal and out. Germans with slightly too-long hair were standing about in imitation leather topcoats (or do I simply mean plastic?). In the lower concourse shopping area there was an "International Sex Shop."

George Gilder mentioned once that travel often tends to mislead because the traveler understandably places great store by what he sees (with his very own eyes), without realizing that what he sees may not be at all representative. Thus he is liable not merely to be misled, but to be utterly convinced that he is better informed than the stay-at-home, who may not have visited the country in question but *has* read a shelf of books about it. And so there is a risk, as Gilder said, that "travel narrows the mind." ("Have you actually *been* to Angola? Well let me tell you, I spent two weeks there . . .")

The danger as I see it is not so much that you give weight to the atypical as that what you see is very much determined by your general worldview; or, if you like, by what you expect to see. Thus I saw repression in Moscow (although I never actually saw a policeman dragging anyone away), poverty ameliorated by hope in China, economic dynamism in South Korea, and so on.

Recently I was reading Ron Ridenour's *Yankee Sandinistas* (Curbstone Press), with very sympathetic portraits of American true believers toiling for the revolutionary cause in Nicaragua. Included was an interesting chapter on one Sheryl Hirshon from Boston, who "became emotionally disgusted with everything in the United States . . . I knew the United States was killing people all over the world . . ." She visited Mexico, and adds the following fascinating comment: "I also saw some of Cuba and was impressed. I confirmed that the problem was the United States and not me."

What can she have seen in Cuba that "confirmed" this? Lots of things, of course. And that is the problem with travel. If you're not careful it will merely confirm what's already in your mind.

I suppose one should be on the lookout for things one doesn't expect to find and force oneself to report them. The high level of economic prosperity in West Germany fell into this category as far as I was concerned. It seemed to be no different from the United States. Indeed, as far as I could see, it merely lacked the bombed-out city centers and conspicuous welfare degradation that so mars U.S. urban life.

Moreover, West German government spending as a percentage of GNP (about 48 percent) is higher than in the U.S. From this I conclude that, as in

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Tom Bethell is a visiting media fellow at the Hoover Institution and The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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Japan, West Germany benefits from an ethnic or national cohesion which makes it possible for people to live at the expense of one another to the extent that they do, without creating serious economic disruption. I conclude also that those who argue that we in the U.S. have a way to go yet in catching up with the West European level of government spending are mistaken. We are no doubt already close to the maximum tolerable level.

We went to Bonn and Berlin. In Bonn we mostly attended meetings—rather more of them than I can precisely recall. We went to meetings with the CDU, the FDP, the SPD, and others; but not, unfortunately, with the Greens, the eco-elitists, whose fundamental disagreement, I submit, is with the twentieth century itself.

In Berlin, Beichman kept asking about the city's 750th anniversary celebrations, to be held in 1987—in particular whether the mayor of West Berlin would be meeting the mayor of East Berlin (thereby "recognizing" East Berlin as a legal entity). But when we actually met the mayor of West Berlin, in a building called the Rathaus, or town hall, Beichman seemed to have dropped the topic from his agenda. Alarmed by this seeming indifference to the Quadripartite Agreement and the future of East-West relations, I asked Hizzoner the question myself. The only problem is that I don't recall his reply, other than that it was on the vague side.

In case you have a suspicion that Arnold and I fell down on the job, may I record that the mayor's name is Eberhard Diepgen, and, my notes confirm, he was born in Berlin on November 13, 1941. He spoke as follows: "The most important idea of Berlin is to be a city of dialogue—a dialogue between East and West. It is necessary for Berlin to solve the problems in the middle of Europe; clearing the air, the rivers, environmental things. So you see that successful policy for Berlin is only possible in more dialogue and more treaties with the East." There was more in this vein.

In Bonn we met with a group of German journalists. They immediately wanted to know what was going on in Washington, and what were the chances that it would turn into another Watergate? We told them we wanted to know the same thing. Thomas Kielinger, the editor of *Rheinischer Merkur*, mentioned the declining population of West Germany, down now to 58 million from 60 million in the 1960s. Likewise, he said, the population of East Germany has declined from 17 to 16 million; and the country with the third biggest population decline was Austria, he said. Is Germany in the process of disappearing? The figures do suggest a seriously declining national vitality.

In response, the government has adopted a pro-natalist policy. "For every child born the mother gets an entire year off with a guarantee she gets her job back," one journalist told us. "And for every one of those 12 months she gets 600 Deutchmarks, tax free." But the catch is that the corporations have to pay this subsidy, not the government. The predictable result, said another journalist, is that businesses now tend to avoid marriageable women at hiring time. Resulting in? More pressure to pass anti-discrimination laws. Thus a pro-natalist policy threatens to turn into a full-employment program for lawyers. This sounded all too familiar to us. The Germans are going to have to do better than this if they are to reverse their birth-dearth. How about a tax-cut, guys? Most of the pols we spoke to seemed only dimly aware of the recent U.S. tax rate reductions, and it is sad to report that tax-cutting has not been an issue in the German election campaign.

We went to Beethoven's birthplace in the center of Bonn. As a great Beethoven fan this was a rare treat for me. It has been lovingly

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preserved, but were old Ludwig to return today he would hardly remember the place because he was only four years old when his family moved. They went to two other locations in Bonn, both destroyed by World War II bombing. Beethoven left for Vienna when he was 21, never to return. As I looked from my hotel window out at Bonn, with its modern government buildings and its endless rivulets of automobiles, I wondered what Beethoven would recognize from the same vantage point. The Rhine, the surrounding hills, and not much else I fear.

I took the train to Cologne one evening but was surprised to find every shop shut by 6 p.m. Talk about regulation! Next to the cathedral there was a well-lit shopping mall, Hohe Strasse, but with hardly anyone in sight. (In an American city, in so central a location, it would have been packed.) It was a cold evening. I chose Burger King, not McDonald's, and sat with a few disconsolate (not rebellious) youths. I had a doppel whopper but even that didn't cheer me up. I could easily understand the discontent of the Greens, without feeling any sympathy for their proposed remedies, which seem to entail surrender to the Russians.

Cologne Cathedral survived World War II pretty much intact, but it was dreadfully chilly inside and I had the uneasy suspicion that it was naturally deteriorating more rapidly than it was being maintained. The ushers sent us all packing at 7 p.m.

Back in Bonn I took a taxi to the hotel. The driver was a very polite, earnest youth. He had the radio on softly and he asked me, as though to start a conversation, what a "honky tonk woman" was. I told him something of the New Orleans origins of the honky tonk, and of the kind of women who frequented such establishments; but then reminded him, in hushed tones, that this was the city of Beethoven's birth, and that it was hardly appropriate to be discussing such profane matters.

Alas, I sensed that he would rather be in New Orleans. I know how he felt, too.

Berlin was interesting—the juxtaposition of freedom and slavery every bit as dramatic as expected; and the Wall of "insulation" between the two grows thicker and less permeable every year. We were unable to discover how much the West German government spends ransoming out approximately 20,000 East Germans each year, but we were told it is "in the billions." We went into East Berlin for a few hours. As Owen Harries of the *National Interest* said after we crossed Checkpoint Charlie, it would be hard to create anything so ugly "unless you were trying." We spent most of the time having lunch in a new, Swedish-built hotel. Nearby were numerous (WWII) bullet-riddled buildings.

On the Kurfurstendamm in West Berlin—more aimless youth. "Video Erotik—non-stop programm." Someone said it was like New York. But it didn't have the energy. Next to the half-destroyed, fully preserved Kaiser Wilhelm Church stand two modern monuments of exceptional ugliness. Germany in the twentieth century has been the center-of-origin of so much of this modernist nihilism—thought to be creative so long as it is flaunted. Berlin itself is filled with museums documenting the decline of Western civilization: From Beethoven to Stockhausen! But it is an interesting place for that reason. Someone should write a book about it.

I set forth from the hotel at 8 o'clock one Saturday morning. It was pitch dark. I was surprised by swinging construction cranes. A couple of workers were crouched on the ground smoothing out fresh concrete in the silent dawn. Oddly, one or two brightly-lit beauty parlors were already open for business. After 9 a.m. I tried the doors of two large and centrally located Catholic churches. But both were firmly locked. □

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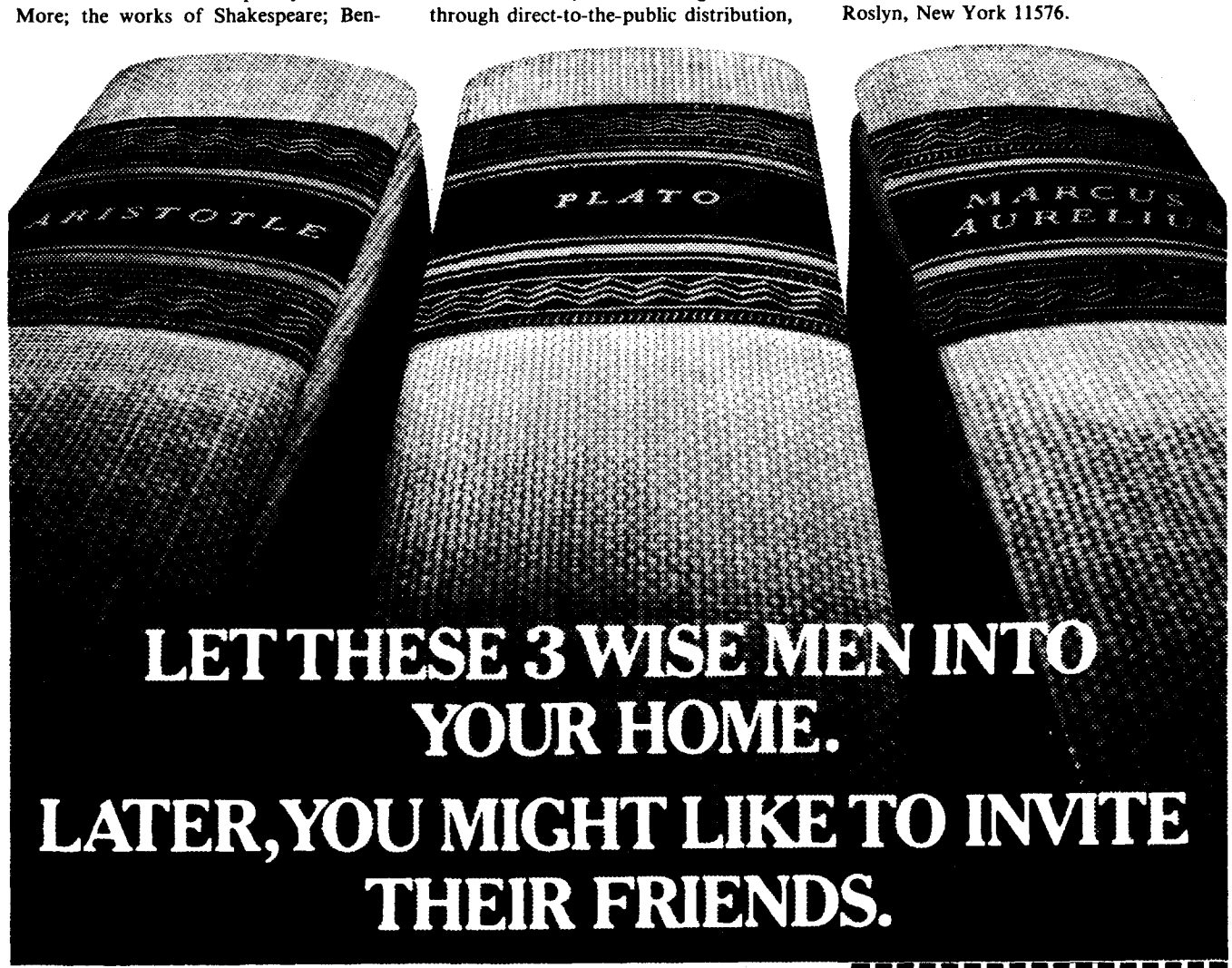

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Benjamin J. Stein

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Reckless Disregard has a long history.

On March 29, 1960, an advertisement entitled "Heed Their Rising Voices" appeared in the *New York Times*. The ad was a fundraising appeal on behalf of a group of black clergymen backing civil rights demonstrators in and around Montgomery, Alabama. The text in the ad vividly depicted a series of depredations which were being visited upon civil rights demonstrators at Alabama State College by the local police. The advertisement also described genuinely terrible brutalities experienced by Martin Luther King, Jr. in Alabama jails. It told of students peacefully demonstrating for justice who were beaten, locked out of their dining hall "... in an attempt to starve them into submission," and a great non-violent leader viciously abused by the police of Montgomery.

The ad ended with a stirring appeal for Northerners to show solidarity with these demonstrators by sending money.

There were two distinctive aspects to this advertisement. First, it was largely false in its descriptions of brutality and repression, which turned out to be often *made up*.

Second, the advertisement changed history.

An irate L.B. Sullivan, commissioner of police and other things of Montgomery, sued the black clergymen and the *New York Times* for libel. He won in all of the Alabama courts where the case was heard, and a judgment of $500,000 was awarded against the *New York Times*.

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, and that was when the history was made.

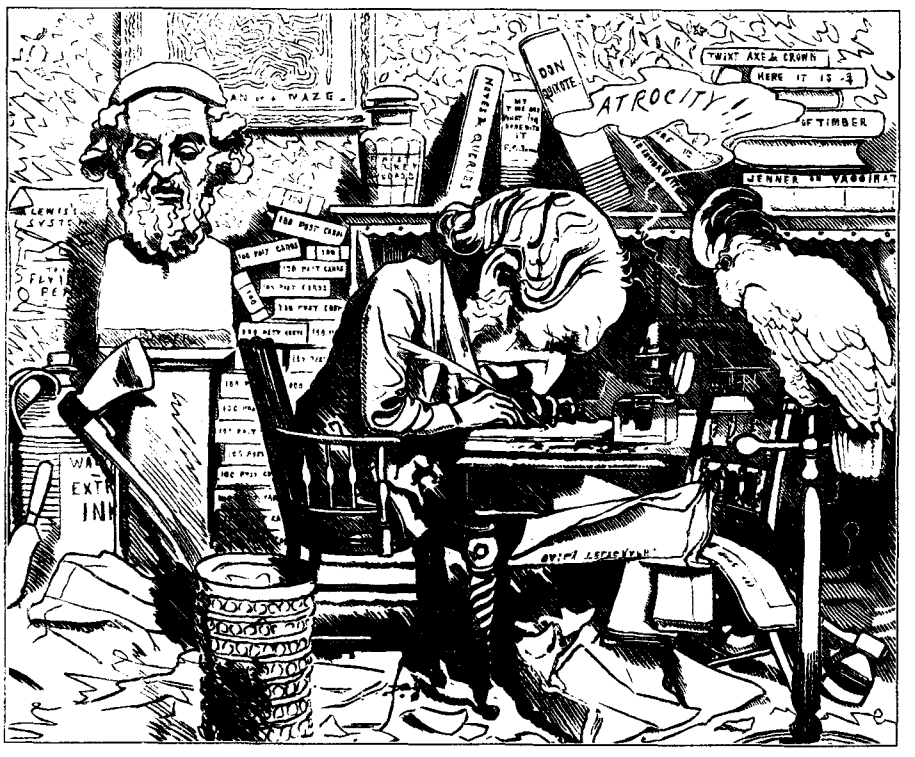
Most Americans believe that the judges of this land decide cases by reading or hearing the facts of a case, studying the law on similar cases, and laying down one next to the other to see what should come out in the way of a decision. This principle is called "*stare decisis*." It means "let the decisions stand."

It took some doing to believe that *stare decisis* was indeed the governing principle of law when the Supreme Court had ruled at one time that blacks were chattel in the slave states and then a few years later said the Emancipation Proclamation was valid. It also took some doing to believe in *stare decisis* when the Supreme Court had upheld "separate but equal" as the racial law of the land and then, within two generations, absolutely barred racial segregation by law. Then there were all those flip-flops about New Deal agencies and procedural due process, and next thing you knew, someone had A Better Idea.

The someones were two law professors at Yale (my alma mater), Myres McDougal and Harold Lasswell. These two geniuses said that *stare decisis* explained nothing. Rather, it was a fig leaf for a far more basic rule of judicial conduct; judges were first and foremost human beings. They put on their pants one leg at a time, and they had emotions and prejudices like other human beings.

Judges did not make decisions by following precedent, said Lasswell and McDougal. Rather, they simply decided how they wanted a case to turn out, then decided it that way. But because they were not legislators with independent legislative authority, they had to *pretend* that their authority derived from following previous cases, or *stare decisis*. That is, *stare decisis* was only a cover for judges making up the law as they went along, according to their whims and fancies.

This doctrine, which was both revolutionary and self-evident, was called "legal realism." Within a few decades, there were few serious legal scholars who doubted that it was revealed truth. Still, by definition, judges had to deny the truth of "legal realism." If they admitted that they were law-makers instead of law-interpreters, people might wonder where they got their authority, and where they stood relative to the Congress or the state legislators.



Legal realism has to be understood, at least glancingly, before one can even start to understand what happened when the Supremes got the appeal on *New York Times* v. *Sullivan*. The justices in their black robes were faced with an awesome legal realism problem. On the one hand, clearly the lower courts were correct in *Sullivan*. The advertisement had been not only false, but wildly, irresponsibly, cruelly false. A man had been called a lawless "violater" (sic) when many of the specifics of his bad acts were simply made of whole cloth. Libel was a crucial part of the legal structure of America. The decision allowed individuals to protect their reputations. The Founders, especially Thomas Jefferson, had held reputation sacred. Jefferson had not wanted libel cases in federal courts, but he wholeheartedly supported and joined in libel actions in state courts. As recently as 1952, the Supreme Court, per Justice Frankfurter, had said that there was no First Amendment protection for libel. Frankfurter said that libel, like obscenity or incitements to violence, was not "speech" under the First Amendment and therefore not protected. In fact, Frankfurter's court had said that there could even be criminal prosecutions for libel and the First Amendment would not stand in the way.

So all of the weight of authority stood for the proposition that Sullivan had been defamed falsely, had lost reputation, and could collect. Plus, the decisions of lower courts are presumed to have some weight just because they saw the evidence and the witnesses with their own eyes.

On the other hand . . . the appellee, Mr. Sullivan, was a segregationist, an official of George Corley Wallace's Alabama, and all of his friends and supporters were racists and bigots too, presumably. The appellants, and the libelers, so to speak, were kindly black

Benjamin J. Stein teaches libel law at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

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clergymen allied with Martin Luther King, Jr. They were for racial justice. Also, one appellant was the *New York Times*, by far the most powerful newspaper in the world, a voice of enlightened racial harmony, a strong, important backer of the Warren Court in its most controversial decisions.

How could the same Supreme Court which had only a few years earlier thundered against racial segregation in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* now possibly turn its back on the brave fighters for racial decency and give half a million real bucks to the racist swine, no matter what the decisions said?

They couldn't. The result, as Lasswell and McDougal would have predicted, was a unanimous Supreme Court reversal of the Alabama courts and a decision, penned by William Brennan, which set libel law on its head.

In a long, bizarre decision marked by an almost unbelievable misuse and abuse of precedents, Brennan quoted Mill, quoted Milton, quoted cases on totally unrelated matters such as membership lists and contempt of court, and announced a brand new rule about libel. Of course, he said it was the same old rule, but no one quite fell for that. Somehow, this was a completely new rule and at the same time it followed all of the old cases. It was a clever trick, and for those who want to see it in action, the case can be found in your law libraries at 376 U.S. 254.

According to Brennan, the nation needed a new (but somehow hauntingly old) rule which would ensure that national debate on crucial issues was "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." There was no citation of any authority to show that national debate had ever *not* been that way. Still, Brennan said that if injured officials could sue for libel and win, that might chill open speech, and that would be bad.

Therefore, Brennan and his brothers created a wide zone of protection around free speech and explicitly said that they would now protect false, defamatory speech in many instances. The theory again was that if there could be libel actions by public officials, free speech would be inhibited. Some lies might not be told, but some truths also would not be told if speakers had to thread their way between truth and lies for fear of libel suits. Brennan wanted everything to come out, the false as well as the true, so that the debate would be truly open. From that day on, Brennan said in effect, critics of the government could speak their minds freely without having to worry about occasionally lying.

The rule Brennan propounded to create this protection for false statements—and therefore presumably for true statements as well—was known as the "actual malice" rule. From 1964—the year of the decision—public officials could only recover for libel if they showed that the offending statement was 1) false, 2) defamatory, 3) made with knowing falsity or reckless disregard of whether it was true or false, both of which were to be considered signs of particularly evil intent, or "actual malice."

How public debate was to be served by providing the public with protection to learn false information was never explained.

How public debate was to be served by providing the public with protection to learn false information was never explained.

After 1964, the Supreme Court gradually expanded the "actual malice" rule so that not only public officials, but public figures, retired public figures, involuntarily well-known figures, people caught in a controversy not of their making, and, finally, almost anyone was included. By 1974 no plaintiff could collect significant damages without showing actual malice on the part of the speaker. In practice, this meant that there were almost never any notable libel judgments that stood up on appeal.

In the ten years after 1964, libel, which had been a basic part of the common law since Magna Carta, virtually vanished as a tool for the protection of individual reputation. Media defendants simply did not lose libel cases except in the rarest of circumstances. Obviously, the relative strength under law of media and of individuals changed drastically. The press was basically free to play with private or public reputation as it saw fit, which was rough play indeed in many cases. How this freedom to lie, especially about private individuals, benefited the Republic has never been disclosed.

The virtual abolition of libel as a cause of action coincided with the apotheosis of the media in other ways. Television had created a fabulously wealthy media super-class. The emergence of a few monopoly newspapers in major cities and a handful of dominant news magazines had joined with legal developments to give to the media a material, moral, and legal protection which media in a free society had never had before.

That is, media by the late 1970s were rich, legally protected, and self-confident, not to say self-righteous. The nation, of course, was dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. But some men who sat before cameras or before word processors were more equal than others.

A few great media empires in particular combined magazine ownership, TV and radio station ownership, financial clout, and a sheen of moral correctness, all surrounded by the moat of "actual malice." Most viewer-listener serfs looked to the castles of the media and were awed.

Onto this extremely tilted playing field in 1982 and 1983 came two exceptional men who were not awed, at least not at first. In 1982, "CBS Reports" aired what it called a documentary entitled "The Uncounted Enemy—A Vietnam Deception." The bizarre thesis of this bizarre show was that General William Westmoreland and his circle had suppressed data about the true strength of the Vietcong prior to 1968. This suppression of the truth, supposedly, had the aim of making the war seem winnable and making Westmoreland seem more successful.

The show used interviews, newsreels, close-ups, trembling upper lips, all of the tricks of the "simulation of the actual," as Renata Adler says in her extraordinary book about two recent immense libel cases in America, *Reckless Disregard*.[1] The show was produced by a dedicated proponent of the deception theory, George Crile, and it featured and was inspired by interviews with an even more devout believer in the conspiracy-by-the-generals theory, Sam Adams.

As Miss Adler points out, the show was widely believed by all segments of the political spectrum and soon became part of the lore of Why We Lost in Vietnam. The only problem was—and it was a big problem—the show was, as Miss Adler shows, utterly, completely false. Many interviews had been coached. Any interviews which did not support Crile and Adams had been discarded or cut drastically. Answers to one question had been spliced onto another. Sam Adams had been paid by CBS without any on-air disclosure of that fact. In fact, the reporters for the story should have and could have learned in the course of their research that the whole theory of the "documentary" was fraudulent.

About eleven months later, *Time* magazine ran a story about the Kahan Commission inquiry into the massacres of Palestinians at Palestinian refugee "camps" outside Beirut during the Lebanon war of 1982. In the *Time* story there was a paragraph which said explicitly that General Ariel "Arik" Sharon had visited the headquarters of the Lebanese Phalange shortly after the murder of Bashir Gemayel by a bomb. The story further said that at the meeting, Sharon urged the Phalange to take revenge on the Palestinians for what had happened to Bashir.

The story was a bombshell, leading to a world-wide outcry against Sharon and against Israel.

There was a major problem with the story. It was completely and totally false, literally invented like the Wizard of Oz. As Renata Adler has found out, the man who sent in the story from Jerusalem, a *Time* "reporter" of long standing in Israel, had been a bitter opponent of the Sharon political party, a long-time Laborite political figure, a man with a known and documented history of false filings of important stories, a man with a police record for bizarre behavior, and a man whom *Time* itself had put on probation for his false reporting.

Both General Westmoreland and General Sharon asked for retractions. Neither man got them. Libel lawsuits were begun in federal courts in New York.

Reckless Disregard is the painstaking, brilliantly realized analysis of these two cases. To write it, Miss Adler, a distinguished critic of many kinds and a graduate of Yale Law School, read most of the depositions in the cases, many of the transcripts (which no one else did), and attended the trials.

Most important of all, Miss Adler brought to her observations a keen sense of right and wrong, a contextual framework of truth and falsehood, and an even deeper sense of outrage. Miss Adler does something in her book which smart people do all the time in real life but hardly anyone bothers to do systematically in a book: she goes through the whole soggy mess of the trials and points out, almost day by day, the lies, treachery, bullying, thuggery, and just plain immorality of the lordly media class and their highly paid lawyers. She applies her sense of right and wrong to the repeated lies of David Halevy, the *Time* correspondent, the brutal insensitivity of the Cravath

[1] *Reckless Disregard: Westmoreland v. CBS et al.; Sharon v. Time*. Alfred A. Knopf, $16.95.

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lawyers defending their sanctimonious media clients, the incredible betrayal of General Westmoreland by Dan Burt, his own lawyer, the whole motley crew of lies and liars and brigands who crucified General Westmoreland to get revenge for petty bureaucratic battles of twenty years before. Miss Adler brings a compass of decency to the revolting spectacle of modern litigation by name counsel and name defendants in the name of the First Amendment.

The reader is compelled to bring his own sense of screaming outrage to the conclusion of the book, because here even Miss Adler is apparently too overwhelmed by the just plain wrongness of what happened to cry out any longer: Even though the trials clearly showed that *Time*'s Halevy had made up his story, that *Time* had been careless to the point of the incredible in running the story, and that Sharon had been savagely wounded by the story, *Time* got off. The jury could not find the requisite degree of actual malice.

Even though Westmoreland had been shown as completely innocent of the charges against him by CBS, even though he had been shown to be the victim of a media smear without any foundation in fact, even though Adams himself had recanted at one point, his lawyer threw the case away in a meaningless and insulting settlement with CBS that offered no retraction and no damages.

It was as if, as Miss Adler brilliantly notes, CBS and *Time*, with their huge war chest for litigation, had not only told lies, but were now able to *enforce* the lies in court.

To go even further, it was as if the power of the media had grown so great and its resources compared even with generals so disparately large that only the media conglomerates now were allowed to communicate any longer. In a grotesque, atomic age mutation of McLuhan, the media were not only the message but the state as well, and a not at all lawful state either, but a state run by power, raw and simple. The freedom of the press, as Miss Adler notes, may now be so great that it has squeezed out freedom of speech for everyone else.

And there Miss Adler's book stops, without a happy ending, but with provocation for thought: What is the future of America if the rule of law has been supplanted by the rule of media power? Once equal protection gives way to "except for Dan Rather, Mike Wallace, and their pals," what is the meaning of law as the guarantor of a free society?

Twenty-six years ago a group of black clergymen placed an advertisement in the *New York Times*. It caused a trial for libel. The Supreme Court decided it on the basis of legal realism, i.e., who they liked better in the case, instead of on *stare decisis*. The result was a small lift for the civil rights movement, and a sweeping catastrophe for the legal rights of everyone outside the Inner Party of Mass Media. The case, and especially its progeny which deprived private citizens of their rights to reputation, ended in disaster. Still, there is hope. We have a different Court now from the 1964 Court. Perhaps today's justices have different interests and goals. Perhaps on a strictly legal-realism basis they have learned that there is no equal justice when, by legal rule, some groups are more equal than others. Once the law makes the Fourth Estate above the law, there is no law. Lasswell and McDougal would have understood. As for Miss Adler's book, read it and weep, but read it. □

William Tucker

HOMELESS PEOPLE, PEOPLELESS HOMES

No vacancy in New York City.

In 1937, Fitzroy Maclean, a British journalist, wormed his way into the Soviet Union. On May 1, he found himself standing in Red Square observing the annual parade. As the battalions of soldiers marched by, Maclean heard the continual roar of a crowd. "At first it did not occur to me to look and see who was cheering," he later wrote in *Eastern Approaches*.

> Except for the Diplomatic Corps and some heavily guarded school-children, there was no one there to cheer. All around Red Square stretched a grim, silent line of security troops. . . . Nowhere was there anyone who looked like a member of the general public.
>
> It was then that I grasped that the cheering was potted synthetic cheering, issuing from loudspeakers, discreetly sited at the four corners of the square and conveniently obviating the need for unhygienic, insecure spectators.

William Tucker is The American Spectator*'s New York correspondent. He has finished writing a book on rent control and is looking for someone in New York who will publish it.*

New York City today practices its own version of this Potemkin-village reality. The city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) currently owns 5,324 vacant buildings containing about 50,000 apartments. One day, of course, the city is going to fix up these buildings to help alleviate New York's monstrous housing shortage—which has lowered vacancy rates to 2 percent and turned 50,000 homeless people into the streets.

But in the meantime, the whole problem of putting real people in real buildings is too complicated and unhygienic. So the city has filled the windows of these vacant buildings with vinyl decals showing cute little shutters, curtains, and flowerpots on the windowsills. The idea is to *pretend* that happy people are living there. As HPD Commissioner Anthony Gleidman said in announcing the policy in 1983, "Appearance is reality."

Why almost 50,000 city-owned apartments sit vacant while another 50,000 people roam the streets is a mystery that genuinely perplexes New Yorkers. The city's Democratic politicians, of course, have a ready answer. The reason—now and forever—is that "Washington hasn't given us enough money to fix them up."

The matter came up once again last November when President Reagan questioned why New York City spends $37,000 a year to put a single family in a welfare hotel. "For $37,000 couldn't

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somebody build them a house?" asked the President. The uniform whine from the politicians was, once again, "You haven't given us enough money, Mr. President." The funds for emergency shelter, it seems, can't be used to construct permanent housing.

Courageously, though, New York is now planning to go it alone. Just last spring Mayor Koch announced a $4.5 billion Ten-Year Plan (that's two Five-Year Plans) for rebuilding New York's housing stock. This MX missile-sized effort will be financed completely out of taxes and the various city and state banking corporations and development authorities that operate off-budget and create a tremendous burden of public debt (it was the collapse of one of these authorities in 1974 that led to New York City's bankruptcy).

These developments will continue to make New Yorkers not only the most highly taxed and indebted but the most thoroughly socialized people in the nation. The city government itself is already New York's largest landlord, owning 15 percent of the housing stock. (Harry Helmsley, who is the second largest, owns only 3 percent and is quitting the business.) The city is already investing billions in *upper*-income housing. The Battery Park City project, just completed, has provided subsidized housing for people with incomes up to $75,000. Now—as the city's largest developer—the government will try to use the "profits" from this venture to house the poor and middle-class.

As an intelligent person, you are probably already asking: What ever happened to private enterprise here? Aren't there any private investors willing to build housing? After all, with vacancy rates at 2 percent, building rental housing in New York should be one of the safest investments in the country.

Here you have hit upon the nub of New York's housing problems. You see, it isn't just that New York City has the country's oldest and most highly evolved system of rent controls. It isn't just that landlords have been turned into a pariah caste, blamed for every social ill. The truth is, everyone in New York, from the most skillful politician to the man-in-the-street, sincerely believes that private ownership has caused New York City's housing problems and so government action is the only solution.

This dead-in-the-water, Soviet-style stalemate in New York's housing economy is a strong lesson to the 200-or-so other American cities that are already tiptoeing into rent control. After all, nobody ever really expected things to work out this way. When New York extended federal wartime rent controls in 1947, it was just to give tenants a chance to get back on their feet. No one ever thought it would lead to an inexorable socialization of the entire housing economy.

But these innocuous little price controls do have a way of getting out of hand. As every freshman economics student knows, rent controls produce housing shortages. But they do not produce just housing shortages. Eventually they create a culture in which "screwing your landlord" becomes fashionable. Thus, even though New York City landlords are probably the most highly regulated entrepreneurs in the country, there is hardly a bureaucrat or politician in New York who does not sincerely believe that landlords are the cause of their own problems. "A lot of landlords are plain incompetent," said Harold Schultz, deputy commissioner of HPD. "They can't even add or subtract. They just don't know how to run a building."

Ironically, rent control also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. By a system of natural selection, it soon produces a breed of landlords who are just as predatory as everyone fears. In a normal housing market, landlords try to earn a living by offering reasonably attractive housing at reasonably attractive prices. The competition with other landlords keeps their self-interest under control. Rent control, however, drives a number of marginal landlords out of business. This is bad news for those who lose, but good news for those who remain: They no longer face as much competition. Now landlords can practice "deferred maintenance"—as John Lindsay's administration actually suggested during the oil crunch. They can let their buildings run downhill or fall apart and still be confident that dozens of desperate people will be beating at their door.

In fact, the rule of thumb in many parts of New York has become that you really can't make money renting a building. Unrealistically low rents practically guarantee sustained losses. But with housing getting tighter and tighter, your building will be worth much more in only a couple of years. If you can just hang tough against your tenants, you will probably come out ahead.

"A lot of times it doesn't even pay to try to collect rents," said David Zincovage, a 32-year-old Yale graduate who helped a college friend run a dozen buildings on the Lower East Side for five years. "If you pressure tenants you only get them riled up and you may end up with a rent strike. Then the building won't be salable. It's much better to keep up the *appearance* that everything is going well and hope that in a few years some sucker will come along and take the building off your hands."

Unfortunately, this kind of market produces very different results for different classes of people. In general, the people who make out best are those who have exploitable landlords—the kind who can carry their tenants year after year without going under. Generally, these people tend to be rather affluent themselves. On the other hand, people with landlords who cannot subsidize them for long are likely to experience very different consequences.

Why almost 50,000 city-owned apartments sit vacant while another 50,000 people roam the streets is a mystery that genuinely perplexes New Yorkers.

Make no mistake, there are thousands and thousands of winners under rent control. Typically, they are affluent tenants with small families who have been able to stay in the same apartment for many years. Their rents will be more reflective of 1968 than 1986. Often they have been able to use their savings to buy a second home in the country. Using the apartment less and less these days, they are now letting their daughter and her friends live in it while attending college. Soon they will try to get the daughter's name on the lease so that the apartment will stay in the family for another generation. ("After all, it's our home," they will say.) Tell them that their good fortune produces very different consequences at the other end of the economic spectrum and they will look at you in utter bewilderment. "It works for us," they will say. "Why shouldn't it work for everybody?"

It is only when we get down into the nether reaches of the population that the adverse effects of rent control begin playing themselves out. Here, buildings are likely to be owned by a retired plumber or a beautician who has scraped together his or her life savings to buy a single building. Seventy-five percent of New York's landlords are in this category, owning only one building. In fact, 80 percent own fewer than fifty units and 45 percent own fewer than ten. For this vast majority, building ownership has been the first step in an attempt to move up the economic ladder.

"I used to see them come in my office all the time," said Charles Mehlman, former director of the Rent Stabilization Association (which administers rent regulations), who now works for Sam LeFrak, New York's largest developer of middle-class housing. "They would carry their wrenches in their back pockets. They'd tell me, 'I'm going to be my own plumber, electrician, carpenter, janitor—I'm going to do it all myself.' Many of them were right off the boat. Some could barely speak English. They bought a building because it was the one thing they thought they could do."

Thus, the logic of rent control works like this:

1. People generally have landlords of their own economic class. Rich people have rich landlords, middle-class people have middle-class landlords, poor people have poor landlords.

2. Under rent control, a municipal government declares, in its wisdom, that all tenants, rich and poor, are allowed to exploit their landlords.

3. As a result, rich landlords write off their losses; middle-class landlords grin and bear it; and poor landlords go broke and lose their buildings. It is the poor landlords' buildings that end up with the painted flowerpots in the windows.

Let me introduce you to a highly successful New York City landlord. He is Jeffrey Manocherian, the second generation of the Manocherian Brothers, one of New York's oldest families of developers. One of the Manocherian Brothers' possessions is 135 Central Park West, a magnificent ocean-liner of a building with stunning museum-sized apartments that could easily command five to ten thousand dollars a month on the open market. →

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Manocherian's tenants are all rent regulated. Consequently his rent roll looks like this: Carly Simon pays $2208.75 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park; Mia Farrow pays $1870.31 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park; Whitney Ellsworth, publisher of the *New York Review of Books*, pays $1587.22 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park; State Senator Manfred Ohrenstein pays $1704.22 for eleven rooms overlooking Central Park; Jean Stein, heir to the MCI fortune, pays $1241.39 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park; James Levine, music director of the Metropolitan Opera, pays $1156.50 for six rooms overlooking the park; Warren Rubin, owner of the Workbench chain of furniture stores, pays $1490.93 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park; Phillip Langer, a Broadway producer, pays $1196.36 for six rooms overlooking Central Park. (To put these rents in perspective you have to realize that newly arrived college graduates in Manhattan are now paying $1500 for a one-bedroom apartment with a view of a brick wall.)

Manocherian says he loses $100,000 a year on the building. He keeps it for sentimental reasons (he lives there himself), plus the ever-faint hope that one day one of his tenants' great-grandchildren may die without an heir and the rights to the apartment will revert to one of his own great-grandchildren, who may be able to re-rent the apartment at something resembling market value.

"Sure I hate to lose money on this building," said Manocherian when I interviewed him. "But basically rent controls don't hurt me that much. What I lose here I make up somewhere else. In a lot of my newer buildings I'm collecting rents that are well above market value. That's what rent controls do—they push some rents down but push others up. I'm lucky to own enough of both kinds so I can cross-subsidize my tenants. It's the little guys who only own one or two buildings who are ruined by the system."

At the other end of the spectrum you will find someone like Katherine Ricks. A 62-year-old retired nurse, Ricks invested her life savings in 1984 to make the down payment on a six-family building in an East Flatbush neighborhood called Junction College.

The dead-in-the-water, Soviet-style stalemate in New York's housing economy is a strong lesson to the 200-or-so other American cities that are already tiptoeing into rent control.

"I never owned a building before," said Ricks, who is black. "But I'm handy. I figured I could fix it up myself. I thought I'd be able to take in a little money and give myself a place to live as well." Ricks paid a $5,000 down payment and took a private $33,000 mortgage with the previous owner. She moved onto the bottom floor and started renovating two upstairs apartments.

Typically, she soon discovered that few of her tenants were used to paying rent. "I found the place was a flophouse," she said. "There were drug dealers in there, people coming and going all the time. I couldn't even find anybody who had a lease. I told people they were going to have to start paying rent or get out."

As soon as her tenants heard the news, they ran down to the Junction College Development Corporation, one of New York's ubiquitous "neighborhood preservation companies" that spend their time organizing tenants and starting rent strikes—with a continuing flow of city, state, and federal funds.

Mrs. Toby Sanchez, executive director at Junction College, immediately became the tenants' representative. Even Sanchez is willing to admit that Ricks's tenants were a "wily bunch," thoroughly familiar with the state housing laws that allow tenants to withhold rents if a building contains even a few minor housing-code violations. Obligingly enough, the tenants had made a habit of breaking windows and stealing lightbulbs just to make sure there would be plenty of violations when the housing inspectors finally came around.

"I'll give Ricks credit," said Sanchez. "She cleaned out the drug dealers and finally got the top floor rented to two very good tenants for $400 a month." Nevertheless, a month after Ricks installed the new tenants, Sanchez and HPD succeeded in persuading a housing court judge to take the building out of Ricks's hands and put it into the city's "receivership" program for privately owned buildings, called "7-A administration" (after section 7-A of the housing code).

The 7-A administration program now plays such a large part in New York's housing—and typifies so much of the city government's housing philosophy—that it is worth describing here at length.

The program, originally set up in the 1970s, was conceived as a "trusteeship," whereby responsible, government-appointed officials—lawyers, accountants, and real-estate brokers—would step in and "rescue" a building from an unprincipled landlord who couldn't or wouldn't properly maintain it. The program was even advertised at times as "helping landlords do what they couldn't do for themselves."

Very quickly, the professional requirements went by the boards. Instead, 7-A appointees were drawn from the ranks of tenant organizers and community activists—plus the political cronies of housing court judges. (Toby Sanchez, for example, became 7-A administrator of Katherine Ricks's building.) HPD now trains administrators right off the street. There are long lines of applicants, since the word has gotten around that 7-A is a risk-free way of getting into the real estate business. In selecting trainees, HPD prefers that they "bring a building with them"—meaning they should already be involved in a rent strike or tenant action that can quickly lead to a 7-A takeover.

Here is how the program operates:

First, the court-appointed administrator is given complete control of the building. The landlord isn't even allowed on the premises. The administrator collects all the rents. If tenants don't pay, HPD helps the administrator evict problem tenants.

Second, 7-A administrators stop making mortgage payments and paying property taxes. They aren't even required to carry general insurance on the building. The landlord must continue to make all these payments out of his own pocket if he ever hopes to reclaim his building.

Third, the administrator is mandated to use the rent monies to operate the building and make necessary repairs.

Fourth—and here comes the incredible part—even after the administrator has stopped making tax, insurance, and mortgage payments, the rents usually don't provide enough money to cover the basic maintenance costs of the building! Therefore, the administrator is exempted from rent regulations for new tenants. In addition, he is not subjected to the rule that rent cannot be collected while there are housing code violations. Even then, according to deputy commissioner Harold Schultz, who supervises the program, "the rents almost never provide enough money to repair the building."

Fifth, the 7-A trusteeship usually lasts only about two years. By then—in 95 percent of all cases—the landlord has fallen hopelessly behind on property taxes and the city has taken the building *in rem* ("as a thing") for back taxes.

At this point, the city itself usually finds the rents insufficient as well. So HPD permits itself to "restructure" the rents in order to cover basic operating costs—once again, *without* making mortgage and tax payments. "We like to get the rents up to about $35-45 a room," said Ned York, of HPD's Division of Alternate Management. "We feel that's what we need to run a building."

Finally, buildings frequently go downhill under 7-A administration anyway. The reason is simple. The program is—in a phrase repeated everywhere in New York—a "license to steal." Time and time again, 7-A administrators simply take the money and run. Even when they stick around, they often rob the buildings blind. A 1986 report by the city's Department of Investigation found that 50 percent of the rents collected by 7-A administrators were unaccounted for.

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HPD claims 7-A is saving buildings that would otherwise be abandoned. "We don't go in unless the landlord has completely walked away," said Deputy Commissioner Schultz, although he later modified that to "the landlord is no longer providing essential services." Thus, in addition to 50,000 abandoned apartments, HPD also owns 35,000 occupied units, subsidizing them every year with $200 million in Community Development Funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Paul Crotty, the new HPD commissioner, has announced the city is going to try to take over buildings even faster in the future—"before they run downhill."

Yet it is obvious that landlord neglect or incompetence is not the problem. As the 7-A program reveals, even the city government itself cannot maintain these buildings on the regulated rents.

Thus, 7-A has simply become a fast track whereby HPD uses the neighborhood preservation companies as shock troops in an effort to get more and more real estate into city hands. The neighborhood groups—all government funded—are basically in the housing business themselves, often operating a dozen buildings at a time under 7-A. They collect management fees (plus whatever rents can be pilfered) and also use the buildings to provide apartments for their members and affiliates.

On the Lower East Side, where almost a dozen neighborhood groups are operating, the competition has reached the point of house-to-house warfare. Vacant buildings are strung with huge banners proclaiming ownership by the various organizations. The neighborhood groups have reportedly divided up the territory by blocks in order to avoid clashing over buildings in 7-A takeovers. One person I met almost got beat up one night when he plastered a vacant building with a sign advertising a rock concert. A roving patrol from a neighborhood organization thought he was trying to muscle in on their territory.

Every city, of course, has a process for taking buildings *in rem*. There has to be some way to collect property taxes. But in New York, the process has become an end in itself. In most cities, *in rem* buildings are recycled back into the private sector within a year. But in New York, *in rem* buildings have become a prized asset, with neighborhood organizations and the city government constantly fighting over how they should be utilized.

When HPD does occasionally auction a few properties back to private owners, it will not let them go without freighting them with social purpose. New owners must rehabilitate their buildings within two years—even though it is difficult to get loans. The owner must also live in the building himself for three years, even though he may have another house. All this is done to protect buildings from "absentee owners" and "speculators."

Yet—to HPD's chagrin—even this trickle back to the private sector is meeting political opposition. In many areas, the politically powerful neighborhood groups do not want any more private ownership, period. Councilwoman Miriam Friedlander, an overt socialist who represents the Lower East Side, has announced there will be no more sales of city-owned buildings to private owners in her district. This is no idle threat. All sales must be approved by the Community Planning Boards—which are appointed by the local City Council member. In addition, the neighborhood preservation companies are always well represented on the planning boards. Thus, in many neighborhoods—the Lower East Side, East Harlem, the Clinton area west of Times Square—the private housing economy is slowly grinding to a halt. It isn't just the government that opposes private enterprise in New York, it's everybody.

Instead of private ownership, HPD advertises "tenant ownership" as the solution to New York's housing problems.

Instead of private ownership, HPD advertises "tenant ownership" as the solution to New York's housing problems. Tenants, it is argued, will care for their buildings where landlords will not. (Tenant ownership here means giving away city-owned buildings to their tenants. The other kind of tenant ownership—where landlords convert their buildings into cooperatives and condominiums—is opposed by both tenants and politicians and is constantly impeded by legislation.)

The showcase is the Tenant Interim Leasing Program (TIL), already carried out in about 350 city-owned buildings. In this little scale model of urban land reform, tenants in buildings that have been through the 7-A process are eventually allowed to buy their apartments as cooperatives for $250 apiece—after they have demonstrated for two years that they can run the building.

Unfortunately, there is one small catch. Even after sponsoring rent strikes, putting buildings into 7-A, driving off the private owners, foreclosing *in rem*, and instituting tenant-owned cooperatives, the city government still can't quite bring itself to let go of these buildings. Although tenants are allowed to buy their apartments for the ridiculously low price of $250, they can't resell them without turning 40 percent of the profits back to the city government and another 30 percent to the cooperative corporation.

Thus, the TIL program contains no real advantages and several disadvantages. While the ownership provides little equity build-up, the "restructured" monthly maintenance fees are higher than the old regulated rents. Quite simply, it is better to have a landlord to exploit than to have the city give you an apartment.

Last winter, almost by accident, I ended up interviewing Marie Runyon, a long-time Manhattan liberal and former State Assemblywoman who now heads the Harlem Restoration Project. Despite its impressive name, I soon found the Harlem Restoration Project's entire agenda consisted of managing two buildings under the 7-A program. One of these buildings had recently been wrested from the hands of the Willing Workers Baptist Church.

Runyon is a feisty 72-year-old with a legendary reputation among New York housing activists. Still, she said, she was privately exasperated with the difficulties of trying to get her buildings through the TIL program. Her tenants—all poor and black—didn't really give a damn about owning their own apartments. "All they know is welfare," she said. "They say, 'I never owned nothin' from nothin'. Why should I buy my apartment?' Here we're offering them this golden opportunity—this Golden Opportunity—and the damned fools won't take it." (Meanwhile, Runyon—like so many other Manhattan politicos—has her own great deal from rent control. Her eight-room apartment on Morningside Heights costs her only $94.09 a month.)

And so, in brief, you see why New York has homeless people and peopleless homes. The city government—plus the hordes of tenant organizers and community activists—are slowly strangling private housing. The government will allow almost anyone to play landlord. Tenant leaders can play landlord, church groups can play landlord, political cronies can play landlord, community organizers can play landlord—all will get generous subsidies plus kid-glove treatment from the courts and bureaucracy. But there is one group that is not allowed to play landlord. That is the people who have spent their *own* money—or put themselves hugely in debt—to buy a building.

Katherine Ricks found this out. The day after her building was put into 7-A administration, she came back to find that Toby Sanchez had already taken over her apartment. All of Ricks's belongings disappeared—including her dog, which she has never seen again.

But dignity and self-determination die hard, even in a quasi-socialist republic. "I worked on that building with my own hands," Ricks told me recently. "It tore me apart to lose everything like that. But I've been studying the Bible and I believe God did not leave us here without power. Satan may be mighty, but God is almighty. Honey, I've got news for you—I'm just learning to use my power. They're going to hear from me again." □

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Edmund Morris

THE ANTICAPITALIST CONSPIRACY

A warning.

There's a plot abroad, folks, to radicalize the language of Milton and Macaulay. I first became aware of it in 1982, when I got a letter inviting me to become a "fellow" at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. What cheek! Time was when that epithet could bring gentlemen to blows:

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, "you're a fellow."
"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "you're another!"

I demanded an explanation, and found that my correspondent was only trying to be nice. He did not realize that his word processor had been infiltrated by anticapitalist agents working for *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The latest edition of this all-powerful rulebook says that "Fellow"—an ancient title of academic distinction (*Nothing is so Impervious . . . as a Fellow of a Colledge upon his own Dunghill*—T. Brown, 1704)—doesn't merit a capital F anymore. Neither do hundreds of other honorable titles. How lower-case can you get?

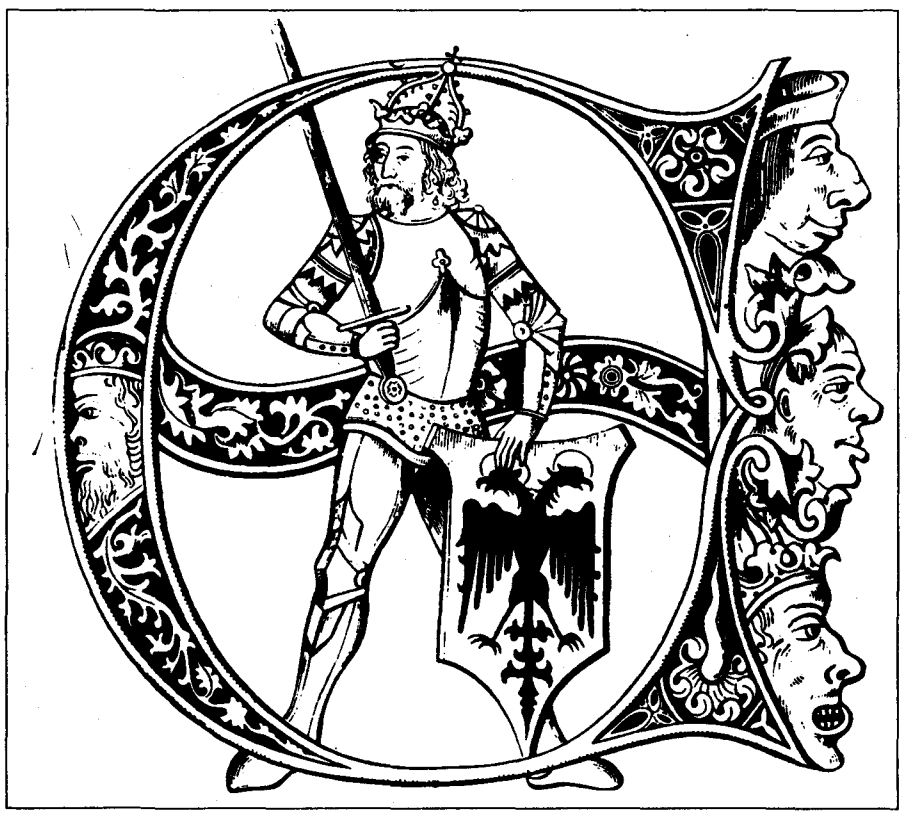
If Fellows are to become fellows, then we may as well start drinking chablis (it's cheaper than the real thing) and electing guv'nors. No uniqueness of style or station impresses today's typographers. They've been brainwashed by the *Manual*. Thank heaven—damn this software, Heaven—Albert Einstein is no longer with us. Imagine his byline in a contemporary issue of *Mathematical Monographs*: "Al Einstein is one of the guys at that think-tank in Princeton." Don't tell me it's all relative. I say it's egalitarianism, and I say the Hell with it!

Well, I accepted the Wilson Center "fellowship," because frankly, I needed the stipend. But I salved my conscience by launching a private investigation of this whole business of stylistic revisionism. Was it confined solely to a few leftist saboteurs in Chicago? I wanted to see if the propaganda had spread to other stylebooks, in what ways, and when. So I got a pair of ear plugs and went up to the Library of Congress (no joke—there's disco music in the stacks these days), and collected back editions of every stylebook I could find.

Browsing freely in section Z253.U, I discovered that yes, there has been a systematic attempt, over the last two or three decades, to make style less stylish, to smooth out differences, irregularities, and nuance—to create, in short, a prose for the proletariat. The revisionism goes far beyond the mere *look* of print; it extends to what the Modern Language Association calls the "social connotations" of literary expression. At all costs, these days, writers must try to sound like television talkers, and scholars must hide their erudition.

I hereby present my findings. Read them, lovers of Gibbon, and weep! Needless to say, it all goes back to Karl Marx.

Edmund Morris is the author of The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt, *which won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for biography in 1980. He is now writing the official biography of Ronald Reagan.*



Kapitalization

One of Marx's revolutionary discoveries was the formula *Kapital=Privileg*. And he didn't mean finance kapital, he meant das kind of kapital vot typographically elevates one *mensch* above another. This stylistic concept was refined by the bureaucrats of Bolshevism, who mandated big-letter respect for institutions (Politburo, Supreme Soviet) while denying it to the average comrade (or fellow). We Americans, in contrast, respectfully capitalized our great until 1969, when hippies took over the *Chicago Manual* and decapitated practically every dignitary in the country. Richard Nixon became just "the president" and "commander in chief," Abe Fortas, "associate justice." No wonder the poor slobs felt unappreciated, and resigned. A few prominent liberals were spared; Tip O'Neill, for example, was always called "the Speaker." Watch that S shrink if a conservative ever takes up the gavel!

Talking of caps, I notice that the *Washington Post* stylebook makes Cap Weinberger "secretary of defense," while James Baker is "secretary of the Treasury." Neither man gets any recognition for public office, but the department that soaks us is rated superior to that which safeguards us. God Himself, these days, gets no more respect than Rodney Dangerfield. Modern manuals are unanimous in saying that He has to be brought down to lower-case level. How is the Almighty fallen! The Common Man, in contrast, is *always* capitalized, and even gets fanfares written for him by Aaron Copland.

Hyphenation

Successive editions of *The Government Printing Office Style Manual* indicate that forced integration of separate but equal words began about the same time as *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. By 1959 a strap-hanger was a straphanger, no matter where he stood on the bus. The hyphen, you see, is discriminatory. While purporting to link apposite units of thought, it in fact acts as a delicate barrier between them, intolerable to liberal percept. Today it barely survives to remind us of a more structured past, when words knew their places and characters didn't have to sit side by side if they didn't want to.

Consider the uneasy pairing of *a*'s in *intraarterial*. Any moment now we're going to read something about anteater experts getting together for an *intraaardvark* conference. I got a letter the other day from someone in our apartment building suggesting we turn it into a *coop*. What does he think I am, a chicken? *Saillike* is not a Japanese delicacy, but an adjective to do with canvas. *Reedit*: some sort of squeaky waterfowl? No, it's what R.

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Emmett Tyrrell is going to do to this article, even though I've tried to polish it myself.

The effect of such compounds *en masse* (a phrase, by the way, we're not supposed to italicize any more, since people don't like to be reminded that they can't speak French) combines with anticapitalization to cast a totalitarian grayness across the page, depriving it of white space and texture, until it looks like an Albanian xerox.

Perhaps I'm being politically paranoid. All right, maybe it wasn't Alger Hiss who took the hyphen out of *absent-minded*, which used so exquisitely to suggest the detachment of consciousness from reality. Maybe the enemy in our midst is the computer, with its brute desire to process all words into digits. One sighs for the verbal necklaces of the Romantic poets:

> Full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn
> Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
> The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft . . .

Let's not get too depressed. The hyphen will always be with us as long as we want to give mother-of-pearl ashtrays to our in-laws. Rules decreeing its use or non-use—*nonuse*?—have gotten so complicated that even the GPO *Manual* admits they "cannot be applied inflexibly." As a result, Federal usage abounds with inconsistencies. "Barefoot" is the approved style for government workers; "barebreasted" is not. Well, considering the size of some of the ladies I've seen down at HUD, perhaps that's just as well.

We freelancers can safely make our own rules. For myself, I'm going to hyphenate as often as I want, in the privacy of my own home.

Documentation

The hottest new book in the Library of Congress is not, as one might expect, *Video Guide to X-Rated Movies*, but the Modern Language Association's *Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Every scholar in the District of Columbia, it appears, wants to get his hands on this bible of academese. I had to conduct a special search before I tracked it down in a secured room at the Library of Congress. It was hidden beneath a pile of Gutenbergs, and I was allowed to consult it only after surrendering my passport and shoes.

What I read made my flesh creep. Personally, I think the MLA *Handbook* should be burned along with *Huckleberry Finn*. It's anti-culture, that's what it is. Those populists have decided to ban the use of Latin citations! Now everything's got to be in the vernacular. Not even footnotes are sacrosanct: they've got to be incorporated right in the text—in *parentheses*, if you please!

Let me tell you, when I came to the end of the *Handbook*, I couldn't move for shock. I sat staring bleakly into space, at visions of long-haired radicals with signs reading I.E. is N.B.G. and PASSIM BYE. I thought of the years I spent working to master the arcana of approved documentation for my first book—all wasted.

Actually, I never learned the exact meaning of *ibid.* or *loc. cit.*; the former always sounded vaguely Freudian, and the latter suggested Yoga. But I knew when to use these abbreviations, along with *passim, q.v., ff*, and other pedantic symbols. As my technique developed, I took a Lisztian delight in strewing *ff*s and *pp*s across my manuscript, in citing names backward (Lee of Fareham, 2nd Viscount Arthur, *ed.*), and in piling so many *op. cit.*'s upon one another as totally to bury the original.

I became a footnote fetishist, taking sly peeps *infra* and *supra*, and breathing heavily whenever I chanced upon a virgin *Ms.*[1] I perfected the placement of reference numbers and *sic* in purple passages, so that nobody would think it was my own bad style:

> As he clasped her to his feverish[64] bosom, and felt a "happy convullsion" (*sic*) tear his frame, he sobbed aloud, "My Darling! My bestloved (*sic*) little Queen![65]

Excellent word that, *sic*. So drily disdainful, so expressive of professorial nausea! "Sorry, that's what the source says—makes you want to throw up, doesn't it?"

Well, goodbye scholarship. I must admit, though, that at least one MLA reform is welcome. They've dispensed with those ghastly Latin numerals that used to make serial publications unfindable. God knows how many miles of library shelves I've prowled looking for Vol. MCDXLVXXXVII of this and DCIIIVLX of that, only to discover that I dropped an L somewhere in copying the citation. It's going to be a lot easier in future to locate past Playmates of the Year.

Antiobscuration and Academic Alliteration

Another worrying thing is the prejudice of modern stylebooks against obscure expression. The British pundit W. E. Johnson, in a manual rather irritably entitled *If You Must Write*, insists: "The aim of written words is to be read, and being read to be understood." If I were Margaret Thatcher, I'd lock that seditionist in the Tower, before he puts all university presses out of business. Even *The Harvard Guide to American History* has slapped a moratorium on "long, involved sentences that one has to read two or three times in order to grasp the meaning." Scholars must blench at this threat to our most basic constitutional freedom: the right to be incomprehensible. Once Harvard profs start writing English, it's the beginning of the end.

The hyphen, you see, is discriminatory. While purporting to link apposite units of thought, it in fact acts as a delicate barrier between them, intolerable to liberal percept.

All is not lost, however. There is one subtlety of didactic style so far unvulgarized by the manuals: Academic Alliteration. Multiple Ps and Cs are still much admired. Thus, two recent works by Charles Q. Bergquist, *On Paradigms and the Pursuit of the Practical* (1978), and *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia* (1979). Real virtuosos use Academic Alliteration for horatory effect, as in this moving passage from a history of U.S. colonial policy, by Garel Grunder and William Livezey:

> Desirous and determined, we declared for dollars and deferred to duty; dazzled and defiant, we dreamed of defense and depended upon deity; delightfully dauntless, we dared a date with destiny.

Would-be imitators should realize that such sublime cadences are not easily captured, as Barbra Streisand discovered when she tried to sing Schubert. At best the result will be embarrassing; at worst, dangerous. Remember what we got when JFK offered to p. any p. and b. any b.! Vietnam!

The Coming Propaedeutical Backlash

I close with a solemn warning to all stylistic revisionists, whether pinkos or populists: if they keep trampling on our footnotes and bawling banalities like "The key to successful communications is using the right language," we scholars are going to shout back, in the language that suits us best. Oxford's spires are still shaking with the wrath of old Dean Owen, who in 1661 caught a revisionist bowdlerizing his *Studio Verae Theologicae Libri Sex*. Admittedly the Dean shouldn't have been preaching *libri sex* to undergraduates, but there was real outrage in his

> . . . crassissima inscitia, & correctorum, quos quam potuerunt minimo (quamvis nimium magno) conduxerunt Typographi, immanis negligentia & auaOia etc.

As Bertie Wooster would say, he meant it to sting, by Jove! □

[1]The king of all footnote fetishists was Sir Henry Yule (1820-1889), who published a translation of Marco Polo so dense with documentation that the text frequently got squeezed up to a line or two. It's a wonder Marco ever made it to Shang-tu. And old Yule didn't spare the *sine locos*, either. Those were the days when scholarship *showed*!

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Maurice Cranston

AMERICA'S NEO-WHIGS

A new generation of writers has brought liberalism back.

A distinctive form of liberalism has begun to emerge in American political thought. It is new, but it has its roots in a form of liberalism which reaches back to the foundations of the American republic. It provides a striking contrast to that other and better-known form of liberalism, the radical liberalism which dates from the age of FDR and which had its apogee in that of Jimmy Carter. A new generation of Whigs has appeared on the scene: and the left-wing liberalism of yesterday's liberation movements is confronted by a serious challenge.

The radicals, it seems, simply went too far. Indeed their ideas and proposals had by the early 1980s become so extreme and irrational that a political satirist such as the editor of this magazine, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., in his book *The Liberal Crack-Up* (Simon and Schuster, 1984), had only to expose their nakedness for the absurdity of it all to reduce the reader to tears of incredulous mirth.

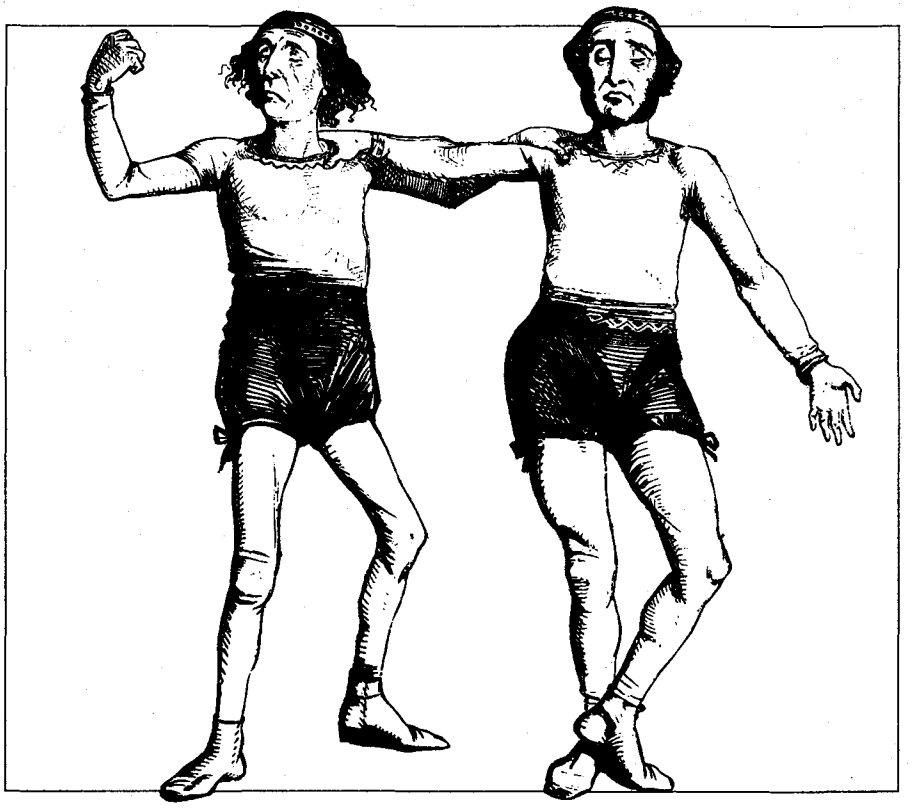
However, things are changing. We are witnessing the emergence of this more classical form of liberalism based on an appeal not to "liberation" but to liberty. It is marked by the appearance of a series of books which restore something worth the name of "thought" to American political thinking. I say "we" are witnessing this, but it may be that a distant European observer like myself is more aware of the development than many residents of the United States, who may be deafened on the one hand by the trendy media and the gurus of the campus repeating the jejune and nugatory doctrines of the left and, on the other hand, by the shrill cry of Bible-punching fundamentalists claiming that the only alternative to radical liberalism is to restore the pillories and prejudices of seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

Maurice Cranston is professor of political science at the London School of Economics.

American liberalism, even in its purest and most classical form, has always been different in certain respects from the liberalism of England and continental Europe. The great French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville noticed this in the early nineteenth century and set out to explain it in his *Democracy in America*, first published as long ago as 1835. He suggested that what the Americans had added to the European concept of free government was a concept of democratic government. European liberals dreaded democracy because they believed that the rule of an uncultured majority would sweep away the rights of individuals and the toleration of minorities. Tocqueville argued that this had not happened in America; democracy had succeeded there and had actually enlarged men's liberties because of the existence of certain distinctive sociological factors, notably the strength of the American family, the high moral virtue of American wives and mothers, the experience of ordinary American men in local self-government, and the power entrusted by the U.S. Constitution to the courts to safeguard the properties and other rights of the individual.

One cannot fail to notice that it is just those American institutions which Tocqueville identified as holding the key to the success of democracy in the United States which the left-wing liberals have been most eager to abolish in the name of "liberation"—breaking up the family, discarding the traditional morals of wives and mothers in the name of sexual freedom, putting local government under the tutelage of federal authority, and using the judiciary to override the rights of individual citizens in order to satisfy the newly discovered social and economic entitlements of groups. It follows that if Tocqueville's analysis of the situation was correct, the adoption of the program of liberation would lead to the ruin of democracy in America.

Fortunately, the ordinary American public has already rejected liberation;



it is the task of political science to formulate a criticism and point to something better. And fortunately in America today a number of writers are recovering, so to speak, the insights of Tocqueville to provide a better understanding of America's present predicament; these writers are producing a new Whig literature. George Gilder's *Men and Marriage*[1] deals with a subject to which Tocqueville assigned the highest priority in explaining the success of democracy in America: the strength of the family and the superior moral qualities of the American wife and mother. Sharing Tocqueville's sense of its importance, Gilder presents a carefully argued case in defense of sexual discipline.

This is not the first time Gilder has written on the theme. He published in 1973 an earlier and shorter version of his present book which he called *Sexual Suicide*, drawing attention to the catastrophic decline in population that must result from a sexual revolution which generated more orgasms and less reproduction. Those were the days when the press was dominated by militant and supremely self-satisfied feminists, and Gilder's book was ungraciously received. His latest presentation of the argument may expect a warmer welcome, if only because the leading exponents of feminist journalism, including Betty Friedan and Germain Greer, have matured with age and affluence into champions of moderation. They should listen carefully to what Gilder has to say, for he makes very clearly the point that the class of human beings which must suffer most as a consequence of sexual liberation is the class of women no longer young. Sexual freedom, he points out, favors only privileged minorities—the young and pretty women, attractive young men, and rich older men who can use their wealth to seduce the young and pretty women. Where sex is free, plain

[1]Pelican Publishing Co., $15.95.

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women and older women, that is to say, the majority of women, are out of the race; they are unwanted.

Only where it is possible for a woman to hold her mate for life through affection, companionship, and moral bonds which transcend the fading of libidinal passion; only, in a word, in the family, and only in a society where sexual activity is subordinate to the exigences of family life can the majority of women hope for emotional satisfaction and happiness.

Sexual liberation sounds good; and it must be said that the entertainment industry which dominates contemporary culture diffuses unending propaganda for it; but in practice such liberation offers its joys only to those sorts of people who were already having sexual gratification enough under the old regime. What is more, the sexual freedom afforded by the new liberalism has been severely limited by the introduction of a new crime, sexual harassment. Male professors on the campus and male executives in the office are nowadays in peril of dismissal if they do as much as give the glad-eye to a coed or a female colleague.

Sexual activity, again, is interesting to talk about; but apart from the exhibitionism of stage and screen, it is something which is still, mercifully, actually practiced behind closed doors; and we really do not know how much more sexual pleasure—or less—is enjoyed by the present generation than was enjoyed at any time in the past. What we do see, and can count, is the number of broken homes, of divorces, of wives and mothers who reject the domestic life, the number of children who go home from school to empty houses, and the number of husbands whose only chance of a dinner is to buy one in a restaurant or a take-away. These figures point to something which, George Gilder suggests, is profoundly unnatural in the liberated strata of modern American society.

In the welfare states of Western Europe, income tax is so high that young wives in the productive classes have commonly to go to work to supplement their husbands' earnings in order to live, with the result that the birthrate in such countries is now only 60 percent of reproduction level; Europeans are a dying race. George Gilder sees this happening in America less from economic causes, since the Reagan Administration is correcting fiscal oppression, but from a perverse choice imposed on young American wives and mothers by feminist propaganda. It is just not chic for a woman to stay at home.

"Isolated, unstimulated, sexually deprived, trapped by babies, frittering away their talent in boredom and drudgery, American suburban women," writes Gilder, are depicted as "victims of male oppression in an exploitative capitalist culture."

Despite the fact that empirical research has shown such women to be actually happier than most, liberation ideology insists that domestic life *must* be unhappy; women who are taken in by that ideology feel that they can express themselves and discover their identity only if they assume a role that has traditionally been a man's. As for kids, they fool around in school and all too often run away, to turn up in photographs of missing children on cartons of American milk. "What happens when sex is liberated," says Gilder, "is not equality, but a vast intensification of sexual competition, from which there is no sure haven except impotence and defeat . . . competition in which the only sure result is an even larger band of vindictive losers, of fatherless children and childless fathers."

We are witnessing the emergence of a more classical form of liberalism based on an appeal not to "liberation" but to liberty.

A very high proportion of such losers are to be found in black ghettos. Some 60 percent of black men are single, and 22 percent of those nominally married live apart from their wives. The black community is dominated by unattached males; so it is hardly surprising that crime should flourish among them. Much has been written about crime and race, either asserting or denying a connection between the one and the other. A book which stands out among the crowd is William Tucker's *Vigilante* (Stein and Day, 1985) which frankly confronts the danger of a popular backlash if America is unable to sustain effectively the rule of law. Tucker notes that the most numerous victims of crime in America are blacks:

> Black men are six and a half times more likely to be murdered than white men; and black women are 50 percent more likely to be murdered than white men. Black women are also four times more likely to be murdered than white women. Even though blacks are only 12 percent of the population, they make up 45 percent of the murder victims . . . and 90 percent of rapes against black women are by blacks.

There is also the better known side of the story, that blacks represent a very large proportion of those accused of crimes. More than half of those arrested for murder, two-fifths of those arrested for aggravated assault, three-fifths of those arrested for robbery, and half those arrested for rape in a recent year were black. Moreover, the situation is worse than it used to be. Crime has increased sensationally in America under the impact of liberation criminology, and the black community has suffered most from that increase.

Liberation criminology argued first, in the spirit of the eighteenth-century enlightenment, that criminals were not responsible agents to be punished, but sufferers from a psychological disorder which should be cured, so that they should be assigned not to prisons but special hospitals, where they could be at the same time given therapy and kept in a place where they could do no more harm. Next, however, liberation criminology decided that the delinquents were not psychologically disordered, after all, but that society itself was sick. Hence, until society was cured by reform or revolution, there was no case for imposing any constraints on delinquents. Crime was a bourgeois myth which needed to be demystified; and that was the best that liberation criminology had to say.

Liberation criminology might have done less harm if it had not been reinforced by another element in new liberal thinking, to which Tucker draws particular attention: legalistic pedantry in defense of the rights of that group known as the accused. How has this happened? Radical reforms of the American criminal justice system in recent years have enabled defense lawyers to use such trivial issues as a typing error in an indictment, or an irregularity in the wording of a search warrant, to secure the release on technical grounds of criminals whose guilt was fully established, even in the most odious cases of injury to defenseless persons. Such legalistic pedantry, writes Tucker, "has made it harder to convict criminals and easier for people to get away with crime." Thus, whereas Tocqueville could see the exact enforcement of the law by the courts as a bulwark of democracy, the judiciary has started to act in ways that undermine democracy; undermine it because its rulings violate the ordinary person's sense of what justice is.

Tucker argues forcefully that a justice system will only work if it "vigorously embodies the public's instinctive sense of right and wrong." If the system fails, then those feelings, he suggests, will be repressed until they erupt energetically in vigilante action. Tucker has no desire to see such an outcome. Vigilantism, he says, can only lead to the kind of social chaos which must imperil democracy itself. He will doubtless be accused of a reactionary attitude, but in fact his whole book is a restatement of what Locke and Montesquieu and the other founders of classical philosophy considered to be a basic principle of freedom, namely that the positive law enforced by the judiciary should coincide with natural justice as perceived by the eye of reason in everyone.

Classical liberalism is colorblind. Radical, left-wing liberalism is, by contrast, highly color-conscious, regarding blacks in particular as people unable to stand on their own feet and therefore needing a preference, or a push-up or a priority to set them on a level with whites. This patronizing policy is, of course, politely known as affirmative action or positive discrimination. The recipients are assumed to be, as were the recipients of Victorian charity, its grateful beneficiaries. But are they grateful; are they even, in the strict sense, beneficiaries; does it really do them long-term good?

Here we may look to the authority of one of the few people qualified to give a serious answer, Thomas Sowell, an economist of international renown, who is black. Although one can well imagine he would rather be writing books about his academic speciality, the history of economic thought, he deals with the question of race in two recent works addressed to the general reader, *The Economics and Politics of Race* (Quill Books, 1983) and *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies* (1972), which are distinguished alike for their elegant literary style and their forthright presentation of the argument.

Sowell shows that in measurable terms, there is no positive evidence of affirmative action programs in the United States benefiting the people they were designed to benefit. Indeed, he adds, "a finer breakdown shows disturbing counterproductive trends." He points out that the least fortunate blacks grew worse off economically under federal affirmative action schemes, while those already fortunate rose rapidly:

> Black males with eight to eleven years of schooling, and less than six years of work experience, earned 79 percent of the income of white males of the same description in 1967 (before quotas) and this fell to 69 percent by 1978 (after quotas). During the very same span, black males who had completed college and had more than six years of work experience rose from 75 percent of the income of their white counterparts to 98 percent. By 1980 college-educated black couples were earning more than college-educated white couples. . . . This was only one of many social programs in which, in

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the name of the poor and the disadvantaged, those who were already well-off were made still better-off while the ostensible beneficiaries were either neglected or made worse off.

Sowell has much the same to report on the effects of positive discrimination in the field of employment:

> Many social and institutional developments in recent times have had the net effect of making it harder for low-income people to be fully employed. A number of laws, social customs, union contracts, and civil service rules set a minimum level of wage—which is another way of saying that anyone whose work is not up to that level in value to the employer will be denied employment altogether. . . . Statistically, this tends to raise the "average" unemployment rate, but the problem is not that the "average" man finds it harder to get a job, but that particular groups find it extremely hard to get a job.

Education is another area where the supposed beneficiaries of liberation have proved to be more often its victims. But this is also an area where Thomas Sowell is able to point to alternative strategies for black education, which actually do work. Here he pleads not for preferential treatment, but for fair and open opportunity. He is himself the product of the system which has already existed on a small scale, and ought rightly to exist on a universal scale, of equal access to learning, of what is known in France as *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. In *Black Education* he tells the story of his own experience of rising from the humblest origins to the highest ranks of the American academic establishment. It is a fascinating autobiography, which it is interesting to compare with that of his fellow economist, John Kenneth Galbraith. Whereas Ken Galbraith came down from a privileged home in Ontario to enlarge his private fortune and teach Americans the European doctrine of public spending, Tom Sowell came up from a poor home in the South to remind his fellow countrymen of the value of thrift and urge them to build their policies on their own best traditions of justice. In the universities, Sowell is a staunch adherent of academic standards, which is something he has had to fight for at a time when the ideologues of liberation have been as busy overthrowing things in the schools and colleges as they have been elsewhere.

One cannot fail to notice that it is just those American institutions which Tocqueville identified as holding the key to the success of democracy in the United States which the left-wing liberals have been most eager to abolish in the name of "liberation."

It is the unflattering assumption of the radical liberals that blacks can only be incorporated in the university system if they are given bonus grades and assigned to easy disciplines, or even corralled in special departments devoted to Black Studies. Sowell writes with eloquent bitterness of this assumption and these innovations. Departments of Black Studies, he observes, tend to be staffed with "faculty that no African or Indian University would hire," and to impart to their students not scholarship but ideology. Why, he asks, can there not be academic institutions where black people are seen not as "problems" but as "creators of something admirable"? His own writings are all the more impressive, and moving, because he appeals unfailingly to reason.

Sowell's conclusions, moreover, are backed up by the statistical research embodied in Charles Murray's important book *Losing Ground* (Basic Books, 1984), which studies the effects of American welfare policies aimed at helping blacks: the consequences have proved too disastrous for poor people of all races, but for poor blacks especially and most emphatically in all-black communities—precisely that section of the population which was the object of the most unremitting sympathy. Murray also suggests, convincingly, that those policies were always the product of condescension on the part of the intelligentsia and the polymaths towards the blacks, whom they "treated in ways they would never consider treating people they respected." These are hard words, but one cannot deny the substance in them.

"Whatever happened to liberalism?" is the title of one of the chapters of Tyrrell's brilliant book, and it is a question which he himself, together with such writers as Murray and Alonzo Hamby in *Liberalism and its Challengers* (Oxford, 1985), tries to answer from the historical perspective.

When did the rot set in? It seems to me clear that it began when Franklin Roosevelt opened the door of liberalism to the Fellow Travelers in the 1930s. The imperialism of the Western European nations was anathema to Roosevelt, but he smiled on the ambitions of the Soviet Union as admirably progressive. Harry Truman, a President much underrated (but given a very fair appraisal in Hamby's book), was never fooled by Stalin; indeed he probably had a better understanding of Communism than any other President. Unfortunately the reaction against Stalinism went haywire with McCarthy's inquisition, which only led to people who were not Communists being denounced to the committee by people who were Communists; then Communism went underground in America, without however ceasing to present itself, and having itself accepted, as just one more form of liberalism.

A book published in 1950 by the literary critic Lionel Trilling entitled *The Liberal Imagination* gave a clear warning to those of us in Europe who assumed that liberalism excluded Marxism, that American liberalism had taken Marxism on board while at the same time making room for anything else that might develop on the left. In the event, no kind of left-wing extravagance or whimsy was unwelcome, and no coherence between one doctrine and another was imposed as a condition for acceptance. Anything that was not conservative could claim to be liberal.

In part this state of affairs was the consequence of the absence from the American scene of the kind of Communist parties and Socialist parties which in Europe whipped and dragooned their adherents into habits of order and obedience. The American left had no hierarchy of institutional forms and no discipline of the mind. The ideology of liberation had no systematic theory, only the capacity to fill its voids with bits and pieces of conflicting theories. Psychoanalysis, for example, was incorporated in the new liberalism in a strangely truncated form: the language of Freud was adopted together with the method of analysis (and a large proportion of such liberals who could afford it were into, in, or under analysis) but the Freudian social philosophy, with its insistence on the paternalist family and conservative politics, was ignored.

Incoherent in its structure, the ideology of liberation was apt to contradict itself from one moment to another. For example, Tyrrell shows how the Vietnam war was variously regarded at different stages of its history. It began as an important ingredient of Kennedy's liberal crusade: the reactionary regime of Diem was overthrown to make way for a more progressive junta, and American forces were sent to Vietnam to fortify resistance to the totalitarian invader. A year or two later, American liberals turned pacifist and protested that the war in Vietnam was wrong. Next, with a further reversal of opinion, they decided that Ho Chi Minh was not totalitarian after all, but was fighting a war of liberation which he ought to be allowed to win; they no longer wanted peace but victory for the Vietcong.

The history of liberal attitudes to the civil rights movement is hardly less bewildering. In the early stages, the objective was at once clear and noble: the extension to the black Americans in the South of the civil and political rights which the rulers of the Southern states denied them. The method, powerfully expounded by Martin Luther King, was no less morally compelling; it was that of racial cooperation and nonviolent resistance. However, as time went on the demand for civil rights turned into a demand for what were called social and economic rights, and for an over-

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throw of white bourgeois supremacy in the nation. The method also changed into racialistic assertions of Black Power and the threat of violence. Even Martin Luther King himself moved well to the left, hailed Ho Chi Minh as a great national leader, attacked American imperialism, and, as Hamby puts it in his book, "sought to spread the mantle of civil rights over the problem of poverty" by "preaching a message of collective guilt to a liberal culture that had hitherto assumed guilt to be individual and specific."

In a word, the civil rights movement had taken up the liberation ideology, repeating in Washington almost word for word the cries of the Third World militants who were demanding financial subventions from the European regimes they had just kicked out. The plea for civil rights was transformed into a plea for reparations.

During the presidency of Jimmy Carter it looked very much as if the administration was responding to the signals of this radical left-wing liberalism, a confused man trying to make sense of a confused ideology, and act upon it. The national economic recession did much to wake people up to the folly of such an endeavor. You need to be rich and prosperous to afford to toy with radical innovations, either as an individual or as a nation. When the cash dries up, you have to stop and think.

"Reaganomics"—to use the word invented in jest by the liberal critics of the present President—has succeeded where the economics of Jimmy Carter failed largely because it cut the ideological cackle and put the nation back in business; enterprise, industry, productivity, investment, and work being the only effective creators of wealth. "Reaganomics" can perhaps be described as a modified form of supply-side economics, so vividly explained by Jude Wanniski in *The Way the World Works*, of which a revised and enlarged edition has lately been published by Simon and Schuster. In a more unsophisticated version, the basic idea was already discerned by the very earliest theorists of economic science. But somehow capitalism seems to have been half ashamed of itself since Bernard Mandeville argued in *The Fable of the Bees* in 1714 that capitalism was motivated by greed, and that greed was therefore no bad thing; a private vice, he suggested, was a public benefit. People have been reluctant to join Mandeville in openly praising greed.

George Gilder—to cite once more that tireless champion of the democratic tradition and rugged individualism—is one of the few economists to attack Mandeville's thesis head-on: "Capitalism does not spring from greed, avarice or even self-love," he argues in *Wealth and Poverty* (Basic Books, 1980), "but from a spirit closely akin to altruism, a regard for the needs of others, a benevolent, outgoing and courageous temper of mind." He even goes so far as to say that "capitalism begins with giving."

If this suggestion sounds too pious for readers more attuned to Mandeville's cynicism, it must surely be agreed that capitalism entails investment, that investment entails abstinence, and a readiness also to contribute to the economic development of one's own community. The Arab oil sheik who transfers all his money from his homeland to banks in Switzerland or London is not a capitalist; he takes all and gives nothing; he is a mere moneylender. By contrast the American entrepreneur who plows his money into productive enterprises in his own country, gives before he receives and may well give more than he receives.

In another book, *The Spirit of Enterprise* (Simon and Schuster, 1984), Gilder provides many examples of the means by which entrepreneurs in Japan as well as in America have made those countries rich. "The capitalist," he writes, "is not merely a dependent of capital, labor and land; he defines and creates capital, lends value to land, and offers his own labor while giving effect to the otherwise amorphous labor of others. He is not chiefly a tool of markets, but a maker of markets; not a scout of opportunities, but a developer of opportunity . . . not chiefly a user of technology, but a producer of it."

It may well be that modern capitalists are content to have their activity attributed to greed since it is embarrassing to have to scrutinize one's own motives and, in any case, conservative and liberal and Marxist economists seem to be generally agreed that self-interest is the driving force. George Gilder performs a valuable service in re-examining the moral dimension of the system, if only because it is so much the present habit to say of socialism, Communism, or any other form of state ownership that it is morally superior to capitalism, and that even if it does little visible good for the people who live under it, perpetuating low living standards in Communist Eastern Europe and causing starvation in the Marxist African countries, state ownership is more pleasing to God, more fully Christian, more agreeable to conscience than capitalism because it is based on sharing instead of selfishness. This particular piece of nonsense George Gilder nails most skillfully, and he is to be congratulated for doing so.

Tocqueville, in the second great work he wrote, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, suggested that radical intellectuals as a class were much to blame for the upheavals of the 1790s in France, because they were unrestrained in their pamphleteering by any real grasp of the practical. He also suggested that the Americans, with their greater experience of politics, were less responsive to the charm and excitement of ideologies, and that good sense could be relied to reassert itself among them. The books I have been discussing in these columns afford some welcome confirmation of his argument.

In practice, sexual liberation offers its joys only to those sorts of people who were already having sexual gratification enough under the old regime.

A question worth asking is whether all this neo-Whig literature adds up to a "new wave" and marks a real turning point in American thinking about politics and morals. It seems to me that it does, and the evidence I have is in the response to it among young readers I have met in my most recent visits to America, and especially undergraduates, who do not care for the worn ideas of 1960s radicalism that are recycled by many professors. Students, keen to think for themselves, are simply not interested in Marx or Lenin or Marcuse, but they respond to Jefferson and Lincoln, Locke and John Stuart Mill (and Tocqueville, too), for the good reason that what does interest them above all else is freedom, and as a clean, fastidious generation, they want the best, most rigorous formulations of the problems of freedom, as opposed to the emotive slogans of liberation.

Will the radicals come back with an answer to their critics? Can we look forward to a dialogue? I doubt it. The ideologues of liberation have taken over from Marxism one of its most useful weapons. To any argument that is at variance with their own their rejoinder is that it is not a genuine argument at all, but an illusion that originates in false consciousness or bad faith; not something to be reasoned with, but simply to be "demystified" as an expression of a hostile, and probably a bourgeois, interest. Alternatively the radicals may ignore their critics altogether. The technique of the silent boycott is effective where radicals operate most of the stops on the organs of public opinion. Even in Tory England, where the government subsidizes various race-relations commissions and groups, the books of Thomas Sowell, for example, although published in the United Kingdom and recognized as the best statement by a black author of the problems of race and politics, are deliberately excluded from the lists of recommended reading circulated by institutions supposedly dedicated to the solution of those problems. The arm of radical intolerance is long.

But even more extensive is the range of human curiosity. When new ideas are in the air, the antennae of the public will somehow capture them. Radical chic is no longer chic. People are looking for something better, and they will find it. □

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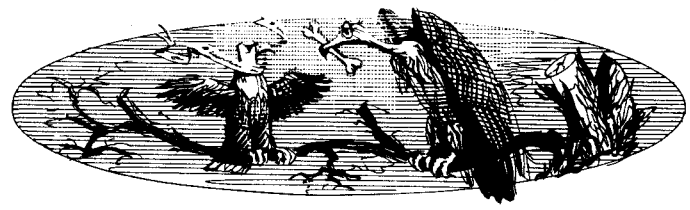
THE NATION'S PULSE



METTLE FATIGUE

by Aram Bakshian, Jr.

Long after we've all dozed off and forgotten—if we ever cared—who knew what when about Iran and the contras; long after the last Administration lamb has been sacrificed on the altar of congressional and media wrath; we will still be left with a more fundamental question: Is there life after the first term?

No politician in the history of the Republic has been the subject of more premature autopsies than Ronald Reagan; again and again, he has jumped off the mortuary slab and routed his would-be coroners. Yet today, in Washington, the talk is not so much of lame ducks as dead ducks. The Hill is alive with the sound of keening, and rather zestful keening at that. The media have long since joined the refrain, and more and more erstwhile Reagan supporters seem resigned to an Administration foreign policy in permanent paralysis and a domestic policy bereft of initiatives and suffering legislative gridlock for the duration.

Is the Reagan Revolution really dead? The answer is a clear-cut yes . . . and no.

The Reagan Revolution is not dead; it is, at the moment, comatose. And the main reason is not external headines. Nor, except as an exaggerated symptom, has it anything to do with Contragate or the new Democratic majority in the Senate.

Bad as last November's Senate elections were, the House returns were a near-wash, and the GOP made massive gubernatorial gains. On balance, then, the '86 mid-terms marked no major shift in public opinion. A few percentage point deviations in key Senate races in a number of small and medium-sized states tilted the balance in the upper house. They did not reverse the mood of America. The subsequent Iran "crisis," fanned to white heat by the media and issue-hungry Democrats, has cost Ronald Reagan some temporary erosion in prestige; it need not end his effectiveness as President.

Even as his job approval rating plunged in the *New York Times*/CBS Poll, 66 percent of respondents still rated Ronald Reagan a strong President, 59 percent said he "has more honesty and integrity than most people in public life," and 52 percent said he "has good judgment under pressure." This is not the stuff—all other things being equal—that crippled presidencies are made of.

But *are* all other things equal? Internally, they are not, and the reason is as much a function of history as it is of adverse current events.

Mr. Reagan is the first American President since Dwight Eisenhower to survive into the second half of a second elected term. In itself, this is undoubtedly a good thing—a return to institutional stability after a long, nerve-shattering interval of aborted presidencies destroyed by scandal, assassination, disasters of war, and, in the case of Jimmy Carter, common incompetence raised to heroic heights.

But the return to second term normalcy, as those old enough to remember Dwight Eisenhower's torpid second term will appreciate, also has its downside, albeit one we haven't witnessed in twenty-nine years.

Call it Mettle Fatigue or the Presidential Peter Principle; what it amounts to is an internal, debilitating disease characteristic of any aging political enterprise—even the most popular of two-term presidencies. To make matters worse, the Mettle Fatigue and the Peter Principle tend to reinforce each other.

Oft-repeated slogans and battle cries grow stale on the lips of weary partisans, and fall flat on the ears of jaded listeners; new ideas grow scarce; the fighting spirit of the first term falls a casualty to ennui and mediocrity in the second. Hence Mettle Fatigue.

Meanwhile, the presidential talent pool begins to run dry. The best and the brightest in any administration have a way of rising to the top early, returning to more rewarding private careers, or striking out on their own for elective office after a few stifling years of service in the White House womb. All too often, instead of being replaced by equally able new talent from outside, their slots fall, by default, to second or third echelon placeholders from within—people who may have been adequate at a junior level, but who are not up to their new responsibilities, no matter how long they have toiled, intrigued, and licked boots to get them. Good yes-men seldom make good executives. Hence the Presidential Peter Principle.

Two bits of anecdotal evidence paint the picture. First, consider the opening chapter of the Iran fiasco. Whatever the merits of the case, and however commendable the intentions involved, it is generally agreed that this curious White House/National Security Council operation, hatched with at least the informal logistical assistance of the CIA, miscarried in a most embarrassing way. True enough, in happier days, a less confrontational press and a less irresponsibly partisan Congress would probably not have blown the story wide open. Indeed, it was arbitrary congressional restraints on traditional presidential foreign policy powers that impelled the Administration to resort to dubious *sub rosa* methods in the first place.

Nevertheless, knowing the current climate, the Administration principals involved acted foolishly. And the principals involved illustrate the Principle involved.

Since Ronald Reagan became President—and before the appointment of Frank Carlucci, an accomplished pro with impeccable outside credentials—there had been four national security advisers (the unofficial title for the head of the National Security Council). The first, Richard Allen, resigned under an undeserved cloud, to be replaced by "Judge" William Clark, who left in frustration to be replaced by his deputy, Robert "Bud" McFarlane, who, in turn, resigned under pressure to be replaced by *his* deputy, Admiral John Poindexter.

Aram Bakshian, Jr. has served as an aide to three Presidents, most recently as Deputy Assistant and Director of Presidential Speechwriting to Ronald Reagan, 1981-1983. The author of two books on presidential politics, he is currently a corporate executive in New York.

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Thus, by the time the Iran episode broke, the NSC was being run by the former assistant to a muscled-out former assistant to a caretaker chief who had reluctantly replaced an eclipsed original appointee. When he finally made it to the top, Admiral Poindexter had been almost inevitably blindered by too many years of subordinate seclusion in the basement of the West Wing, an able, intelligent palace eunuch suddenly placed in a grueling command post.

Similarly, the young career Marine, Lt. Col. Oliver "Ollie" North, who handled the details of the Iran/contra caper, had spent most of the first term as an isolated, overworked junior NSC aide in the same West Wing basement.

The myopic, courtier/bureaucrat existence of "gofers" in the Forbidden City is hardly good preparation for the kind of work—and the kind of decisions—these two basically able and dedicated men were suddenly called on to deliver in the second term. They were outstanding in their first-term capacities. In their elevated second-term capacities, they simply Petered-out, miscast for roles they were never meant to play. They are the victims, not the villains, of this little political farce.

Another illustration in a smaller scale. Many journalists and politicians have remarked that, during last November's campaign, President Reagan's speeches lacked force, freshness, and any positive sense of direction. In short, they suffered from Mettle Fatigue, and did little good for either Ronald Reagan or the candidates (usually losing) he supported. Some of this may be hindsight, but the results speak for themselves. And, again, the Peter Principle was at work.

President Reagan's original director of speechwriting, Kenneth Khachigian, who had done a masterful job in the 1980 campaign, resigned in early 1981 to pursue a more lucrative private career in California. I know, because I was offered—and declined—his job at the time. A junior member of the speechwriting staff who had feverishly campaigned for the position was then allowed to serve in an acting capacity for several months, but was found wanting. In early autumn of 1981, I was again asked to take the job and accepted with the stipulation that I would only stay for a year or two. At the end of 1983, I accordingly resigned to resume my private career. One of my subordinates, Bentley Elliott, succeeded me on my recommendation.

Mr. Elliott, a conscientious Reaganaut if ever there was one, was reportedly pressured out in the summer of 1986 due to in-house feuding. His direct superior, White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan, also a victim of intramural sniping, recommended two eligible replacements for the job. They were both vetoed after much internal intrigue.

The result: Cut off from new energy and new talent during the crucial 1986 campaign, an under-manned White House speechwriting staff was led by the same acting head who had been passed over for the job twice in 1981, and again in 1983, as inadequate . . . and this during what was probably the most important legislative election of Ronald Reagan's presidency. Mettle Fatigue and the Peter Principle with a vengeance.

Do these examples—and they are only two of many—mean that the balance of Ronald Reagan's second term, by its very nature, must be second rate?

Again, the answer is yes . . . and no. Mr. Reagan is still more personally liked and esteemed than most past Presidents at any time in their tenure. He has a core of strong beliefs and principles, many of which are shared by the electorate. The Democratic opposition has yet to find a positive, unifying theme to counter him.

The ill, then, is internal. So, too, must be the cure. □

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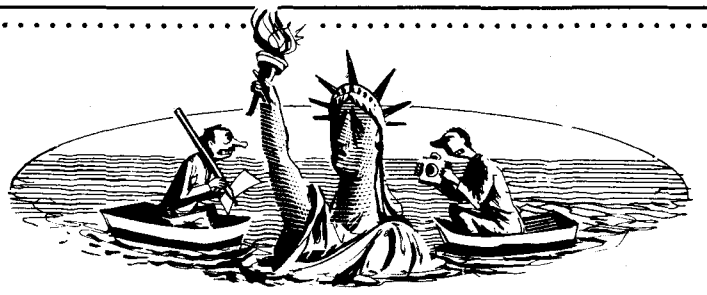

GETTING IT STRAIGHT

by Michael Ledeen

All media watchers are grateful for the Iranian/contra business, since it will give us years of raw data. And those who are concerned about the influence of media over policy now have additional reasons for anguish, for rarely have so many persons in Washington acted out roles defined for them by the media, and rarely has there been so much false information in the media, as in the first few weeks of the Iran/contra story.

Before looking at the first few examples, let's take a moment off for a confession of personal sin, and the admiration of professionalism elsewhere. First the sin: last month, I wrongly identified the *Wall Street Journal*'s excellent Mr. Walcott as James; he is actually John. I'm sorry about that, especially because he was honest enough to correct a false statement about me that he had been fed by some liar in the government. The same goes for the *Chicago Tribune*, which bought the fable that I had been on Robert McFarlane's airplane to Tehran, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, which incredibly accused me of advocating the disinforming of the American media, citing my book, *Grave New World*, as evidence.

While I'm grateful for the corrections, these worthy publications would have saved themselves (and me, too!) some embarrassment by checking first. As for the *Post-Dispatch*, they should be singled out for particular punishment, since the journalist in question, a Ms. Patricia Tummons who works out of the newspaper's St. Louis headquarters, has trouble reading books. When I called her up to discuss the matter (after having received no cooperation from the Washington bureau, which simply passed the buck back to the home office), she stuck by her story in the best tradition of Ben Bradlee. I then asked her what she thought my book was about, anyway. "A new order," said she, suggesting strongly that she hadn't read it very carefully (it's about American foreign policy, and the current superpower crisis).

Again, however, people make mistakes, especially in daily newspapers where deadlines are often very short. But such claims have to be checked. In Ms. Tummons's case, the quotation offered from my book did not support the claim she made. Any good editor should have seen that, and asked her to go back and read the material again. That would have saved the paper the mental anguish of apologizing—as they did.

So, on to Irangate.

We have here a generation of younger journalists who have long felt cheated at being born too late to participate in the overthrow of the Nixon Regime, and now they have their chance. So they are playing "Jr. Watergate," with much higher stakes than the last time. For in the original-cast version, the government was paralyzed over an investigation into the coverup of a burglary, but foreign policy retained at least some semblance of coherence, what with the extraordinary team of Kissinger, Haig, Sonnenfeldt, et al. still in place and only marginally damaged by the fallout from Watergate. This time, the crisis strikes directly at the foreign policy community.

It should accordingly come as no surprise that the problems that gave rise to the crisis in the first place—the lack of discipline in the foreign policy bureaucracy (above all, leaks) and the lack of information about Iran—should continue to play a major role in the "scandal." So we have yesterday's secret testimony in today's front-page story. And today's front-page story is very likely to be wrong, because the leakers are very often those who were excluded from the policy, are angry at being "out of the loop," and are consequently trying to shoot down those who excluded them.

Thus, if you go back and track the stories about McFarlane's trip to Tehran, you will find dozens of versions: What was it about? Who was on the plane? What else was on the plane? What did they hope to achieve? What, if anything, did they achieve?

The same holds true for most every element of fact, some of which are frightfully important. And when you look at the different versions, you should realize that behind every version lies someone who wants American policy to move in a certain direction. The clearest case of this is the question, "Who started it all?" Since there are three troupes of actors in this drama (Americans, Iranians, Israelis), we begin with three hypotheses: The Americans started it (for a strategic démarche to Iran? a subtle attempt to make contact with "moderates"? an effort to get the hostages out? an effort to save the life of CIA official William Buckley?); the Israelis started it (to get the Americans to embrace the Israeli policy of working with Iran, no matter how hateful the regime? to permit them to go ahead with their own arms sales to Khomeini? to enable Iran to win the war with Iraq?); or, finally, the Iranians started it (to trick the Americans into ending the arms embargo? to reach out for better relations at a time when Iran seemed likely to fall apart? to strengthen one faction at the expense of another?). Finally, we can add some other possible explanations: the Saudis—through Adnan Khashoggi—started it (to take out insurance with the Iranians? to achieve an end to the Iran-Iraq war? to facilitate better relations between the United States and Iran?); Khashoggi himself started it (his own version, as presented to Barbara Walters); Khashoggi and Iranian arms dealer Ghorbanifar started it (to make money and have a good time?).

Of these, the one that has received the greatest quantity of ink and airtime (at least according to my own unofficial survey—not the most reliable source, if you must know) is the "Israel started it" theory. The *Wall Street Journal* has given a lot of space to this notion, suggesting that Israel was selling arms to Iran all along, and found a clever way to drag us along. The nastiest of these stories was written in the *New York Times* by David K. Shipler on November 27, and the key quotation—from a "former official in the National Security Council"—reads: "We got sucked into some Israeli scheme." Shipler developed this into a broader theory according to which the arms-for-hostages scheme was initiated by the Israelis and then implemented in Washington through a network of friends:

> Israel's impact on White House thinking has been enhanced, according to some former officials, by several National Security Council aides who are strong Israel supporters and are attracted by Israeli intelligence abilities and political analysis. Among them have been Robert C. McFarlane . . . ; Dennis Ross, the current Middle East specialist in the National Security Council; Howard Teicher, the N.S.C.'s senior director of political-military affairs; the late Donald R. Fortier, who was a Deputy Assistant to the President, and Michael Ledeen, who served as a consultant to the National Security Council.
>
> Mr. Ledeen, who was reportedly instrumental in the Israeli-American approach to Iran, is a founder of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs in Washington, which supports a close alliance with Israel.

The trouble with this view—which is disturbingly reminiscent of some of the early twentieth-century theories of a vast international conspiracy headed by the Elders of Zion—is that it seems that at least some of the key conspirators (including McFarlane himself) recommended that the project be dropped late in 1985, and that it was then reportedly revived by persons such as Admiral Poindexter, Lt. Col. North, and retired General Secord, all of whom were key figures in the fight to sell AWACS to Saudi Arabia. This was not a popular cause in pro-Israel circles in Washington, lest we forget.

Before trying to explain how Israel "sucked us in," it would have

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Michael Ledeen is senior fellow in international affairs at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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been better to try to figure out how the policy started, what its aims were, and who asked whom to do what. As the story emerges, I expect it will finally be discovered that the Israelis cooperated with the United States, but certainly did not initiate the whole thing (indeed, my own conviction is that the fundamental initiative came from Iranians).

It is also useful to review the theories about the "meaning" of the episode. For Meg Greenfield at the *Washington Post*, it stemmed at least in part from a lack of experience at the National Security Council. In her view (December 8), the three key players (McFarlane, North, Poindexter) weren't quite up to the task because of their backgrounds:

> Good, perhaps too good, military officers all, they no doubt believed themselves to be following, fulfilling policy. They should certainly have been under much stricter guidance. None of them, not even McFarlane, who is clearly the most proficient of the three in these affairs, is a seasoned foreign-policy hand.

Now what do you want? McFarlane was on the NSC staff under Kissinger, a top aide to Senator Tower on the Senate Armed Services Committee, counselor at the State Department, deputy to Judge Clark at the NSC, and then national security adviser to the President. Is that not enough "seasoning"?

The award for worst essay on the subject goes by acclamation to Michael Kinsley of the *New Republic* for his sophomoric piece in the *Post* that began: "The fall of Reagan is a laughing matter. The only irritating aspect of the otherwise delightful collapse of the Reagan administration is the widespread insistence that we must all be poker-faced about it."

Even David Broder of the *Post* had to blast that one, and rightly so.

Finally, a small medal to Senator David Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, who wrote, again in the *Post*, about the history of congressional oversight. He said that it stemmed from past executive branch abuses, such as "the inept and overly secret preparation for the Iran rescue mission."

I suppose he wanted the preparation done in Washington, so that Congress could have participated in the exercises, and the training of the Delta Force could have been filmed for the evening news. □

THE PUBLIC POLICY

GO NAVY

by Thomas Donatelli

There is a knee-jerk reaction inside Washington that the best way to reform an institution or resolve an organizational problem is to centralize decision-making. Any first year business student will tell you this is a formula for disaster. He knows undue concentration on organization is bound to create more problems than it solves, because it stifles individual initiative, ignores the importance of individual accountability, and injects a good measure of sluggishness into the making of decisions.

So why has Congress done just this in its attempt to curb bureaucratic and operational inertia in the Defense Department? Indeed, some congressmen have become so carried away with our defense dilemmas that, in a last ditch effort to find quick solutions to our problems, they have aimed their political salvos at the wrong target—the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Why?

The whole debate over what constitutes the best form of modern defense organization and how it should stand in relation to our operational capabilities has been going on ever since the end of World War II. Its intensity has waxed and waned over the years, but it has remained essentially intact and refuses to go away. This really isn't very surprising—after all, how a global power should go about effectively structuring and deploying its military resources, especially in a world with an ever-changing political and technological climate, is a very complicated question. The problem is, our legislators are frequently befuddled by complicated questions, which in turn makes them dupes for the "new ideas" boys waiting in the wings for the right moment to pounce, and pounced they have. The result is the new Goldwater-Nichols Military Reorganization Act.

Roughly speaking, this legislation will, in the name of efficiency, dismantle the JCS as it has traditionally existed in favor of a nineteenth-century Prussian-style centralized military bureaucracy, headed by a single military Chief of Staff. In addition, all top military commanders (those in the field included) will be answerable to the new Chief, who will also double as the principal adviser to the NSC. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this new law is that the new Chief will assume a favored place in the operational chain of command, strengthening his role as principal spokesman for the nine commanders who control our nation's forces.

At first glance, all of this may appear to be nothing more than an arcane defense quibble—which, alas, it's not. It is a significant change from our traditional system in which the heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines conferred with our leaders on defense policy, in concert and as equals, while attending to their respective services as administrators, planners, and advisers. Those leading the reformist charge think such a system encourages shoddy military thinking (regardless of the Grenada rescue or the terrorists nabbed in mid-air): Their claim is that since members of the JCS are also chiefs of their respective services, they are unable to set aside parochial biases on both operational and procurement issues, and since consensus is required before a position can be taken, decisions are needlessly compromised. The reformers' answer? Limit the independence of the four services and endow an all-powerful JCS chairman with decision-

Thomas Donatelli is an assistant editor of the Public Interest.

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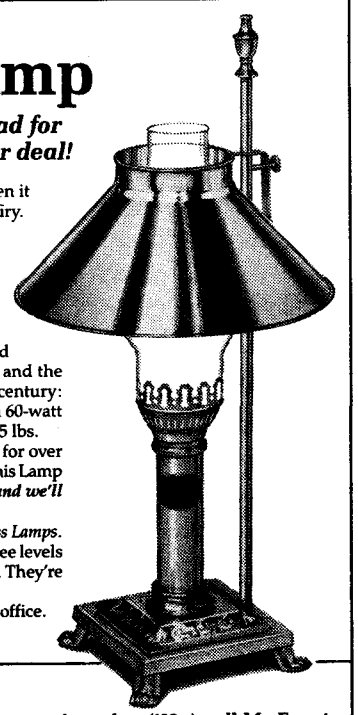

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making (i.e., command) authority.

Unfortunately, this solution will not be efficient and in fact betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the proper role of the JCS. It will impose more bureaucracy on an already overly bureaucratic Pentagon by creating yet another layer between the Secretary of Defense and the field commanders. More alarming, it will isolate our civilian leaders from decision-making, with the new JCS Chairman taking command initiatives without their approval, and, in time, it may hamper our operational ability in every military theater around the world.

The Joint Chiefs are not, and were never intended to be, a centralized decision-making body, and for good reasons. For one thing, centralized bodies are not only less flexible, they are less vulnerable to constitutional checks and therefore less accountable. Quite simply, a strong and independent military is one capable of tyranny. In its traditional form, the JCS avoided this danger by functioning as a team to provide careful, balanced advice on defense policy to our elected, *politically accountable* leaders. They could do this because they brought their particular perspectives—air, maritime, land—to bear on particular problems, with no single service suppressing the views of the others. This competitive atmosphere not only guaranteed that our leaders received the broadest possible advice on everything from strategy to procurement policy, it also insured their full control over the substance and direction of policy, making political accountability unambiguous.

As Navy Secretary John Lehman pointed out in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, American defense is predicated on two basic principles: "that ultimate control of defense must remain, in both concept and substance, in the hands of civil authorities," and "that those who have the responsibility to carry out a function must also possess the requisite authority—and those who have the authority must be held to account." This is as true at the administrative level in the Pentagon as it is at the operational level in the field. The birth of a central bureaucracy not only will undermine both principles, it will almost surely mean the death of the vital competition of military ideas, with the Navy and the Marines taking a back seat. The reasons for this are clear.

Under the present command structure, each service has been allocated a maximum number of generals (in the case of the Navy—admirals) who may serve at any given time. These caps are set by congressional mandate, with the number of generals per service based proportionally on the total number of men per service. And so, the Army and Air Force have far more generals (412 and 343 respectively) than the Navy and Marines (318 combined), which is not entirely unreasonable since they are, after all, the two largest services. Yet, prior to this ill-conceived reorganization, these generals tended only to their *own* services, and could therefore compete in the world of "military ideas" from their own particular perspective. This arrangement allowed our maritime and amphibious forces, although smaller, to maintain a creditable voice. This will now change.

Under the new JCS, each service will be required to take a designated number of command advisers away from their respective services and commit them to a centralized bureaucracy that in turn will oversee the affairs of all four services. But since the Navy and Marines will not have as large a representation in this bureaucracy, they will have a proportionally diminished voice. Indeed, their ability to compete in the policy arena will be compromised.

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John Norton Moore is director of the Center for Law and National Security at the University of Virginia School of Law and is the author of numerous books and articles on international law.

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ing as "reform." It is also a subtle, determined, and ill-advised effort to redirect the entire course of American strategic thinking. Concretely, the reformers' strategic perspective has manifested itself through a primary reliance on a single strategy, service, or theater in the event of a war, very much in the way they now intend to place primary reliance on a single JCS Chairman. The result could mean a realignment in our present defense posture. Reformers want to put a disproportionate emphasis on NATO's central front at the expense of our other regional interests in the Middle East or Southeast Asia. If they get their way, a drastic shift in resource allocation could occur away from our maritime divisions in favor of our conventional air and land defenses in Western Europe. And because the Army and Air Force will now enjoy even greater influence, it is not inconceivable that a newly empowered JCS Chairman will come from one of these services, ready to influence policy in this direction. So much for the suppression of parochial biases!

The whole question of impartiality aside, however, such a shift would create a strategic orientation that would speak not to our strengths but to our weaknesses. The United States is not, first and foremost, a land power but a sea power isolated by oceans from Europe and Asia. And while this distance can provide an important, even decisive military advantage, it does not offer absolute protection. All of it hinges on the balance of naval strength. It therefore makes no sense for us to talk about winning a war in Western Europe, or anywhere else for that matter, if our Navy cannot even sustain a working command of the major sea lines of communication. This is not to suggest that we could, even through decisive battle, defeat the Soviet Union strictly with sea power. But our Navy would—at minimum—have to win *its* war, which would mean guaranteeing a measure of sea control whenever and wherever the Western alliance would need it.

This is not a piece of military ideology, it is a geo-political fact. In the event of war in either Europe or the Pacific, our naval forces would have to move forward globally in order to drive Soviet submarines back toward their coast (and away from the sea lanes along which American troops and supplies might travel), while computer-based naval defense systems could engage hundreds of enemy ships, planes, and missiles. These capabilities make it possible to strike decisively at Soviet sea and air power, but they must also be sustained and this requires a Navy with a strong enough voice in Washington to make itself heard.

The Soviets know all too well how important it is for us to command the seas, and have responded accordingly. Today, although we continue to enjoy a narrow margin of overall superiority in naval tonnage, the Soviets have almost three times as many ships. Since 1970, the Soviets have introduced thirteen new classes of submarines, new battle cruisers, aircraft carriers, and strike bombers. Their buildup shows no signs of abating and will only help to ease the limitations their geography imposes on their ability to project power—limits partially surmounted by Soviet basing facilities in North Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, not to mention Cuba and possibly Nicaragua.

Such a growing and considerable threat will require us to think long and hard about how we are going to maintain a competitive military edge in the future, especially as the changing world economy, and with it a growing Pacific Basin, begins to redefine our strategic interests for us. As David Aikman has pointed out in his recent book, *Pacific Rim*[1]:

> . . . the Pacific challenge has nevertheless emphatically arrived on America's doorstep and is growing increasingly impatient to be addressed. . . . At stake is the future peaceful and economically successful development of some 60 percent of the population of the world. . . . Also at stake is American resolve in facing up to—and if necessary, facing down—a conspicuously growing effort by the Soviet Union to expand its strategic and political influence in the Pacific Ocean.

Clearly, this new region will soon begin to compete with our other defense obligations around the world. This doesn't mean that we should turn a blind eye to our European responsibilities, but it does mean that even in a time of budget cuts we must develop greater global "reach," the kind our maritime forces can provide. To meet this challenge our Navy and Marines may not need more influence than our other services (although some say they do) but they certainly cannot afford to have less. A centralized JCS that can potentially restrict our flexibility and tie the hands of our Navy is not the answer. □

[1]Little, Brown and Co., $8.95 paper.

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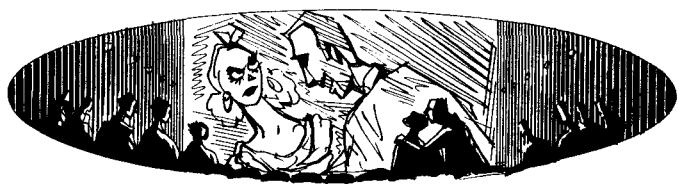

LIFE WITH FATHER

by Bruce Bawer

The new film *The Mosquito Coast*, which is based upon the best-selling 1982 novel by Paul Theroux, tells the strange, captivating, and ultimately horrific story of a fanatical visionary named Allie Fox (Harrison Ford), an inventor and Harvard dropout who, disgusted with America, uproots his wife and four children from their rural Massachusetts home and moves them to a remote river settlement in the Mosquitia district of Honduras.

Allie's litany of grievances against the U.S. is a hodgepodge of familiar left- and right-wing gripes, and he continually lectures everyone around him—especially his sensitive, level-headed thirteen-year-old son, Charlie (River Phoenix), the narrator—to the effect that America has become a nation of mindless consumers, that the dollar is worth only twenty cents, that American kids are all drug addicts and murderers, that we're selling our country out by buying foreign-made products, that TV is numbing our minds, junk food is rotting our bodies, and aerosol cheese spread is destroying the ozone layer. "I'm the last man!" Allie proclaims, and his obsessive determination to create a new life for his family in the tropical wilderness away from Holiday Inns, Fudgesicles, Twinkies, and Duraflame logs makes him at once funny and frightening.

Paradoxically, it also makes him a grotesque parody of the traditional foursquare American individualist—an arrogant, self-reliant, jeremiad-happy New Man obnoxiously proud of his "know-how" and his New England thrift, devoted to the invention of labor-saving gadgets, eager to construct a City on a Hill, cockily certain that all problems can be fixed, all burdens lifted. At bottom, indeed, Allie's real gripe against America is that its civilization is already in place; there's no wilderness to conquer, no way for him to build a New World of his own.

So it is that Allie drags his clan to the village of Jeronimo in the Honduran jungle, a place as primitive as Plymouth Rock must have been when William Bradford first climbed off the boat, and begins to transform it. But because he is reckless and headstrong and absolutely incapable of compromise—and mostly because, as soon becomes apparent, he is out-and-out insane—Allie leads his family into disaster. The novel's nightmarish vision of their fate recalled Joseph Conrad; its strengths—aside from its memorable portrait of Allie Fox—were a richly detailed depiction of the Central American milieu, an excellently paced and suspenseful narrative (which gradually assumed an almost mythic power), and a touching delineation of Charlie's feelings—of love and hate, resentment and worship—for his tyrannical, godlike father. As a matter of fact, the novel was most effective not as a tragic fable about the futility of challenging God's power or the folly of visionary excess, or (as some reviewers vigorously maintained) as a cautionary

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer and author of* The Middle Generation, *a study of four twentieth-century American poets (Archon Books).*

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tale about the consequences of unrestrained American individualism, meliorism, or colonialism (after all, Allie's most ruinous escapades are the consequence not simply of too much American-style zeal and determination but of *madness*). Rather, the novel succeeded most decidedly as an allegory about fathers and sons—about the way fathers dominate their young sons with threats, promises, lies, and the construction of personal mystiques, and about the way sons yearn for their fathers' approval, secretly and guiltily long for their fathers' death, and, upon learning ultimately that their fathers are not all-knowing and omnipotent gods, feel the world opening up to them, and become more able to understand, to forgive, and to love.

On the whole, the film—which was directed by the Australian Peter Weir (*The Last Wave, The Year of Living Dangerously, Witness*) and written by Paul Schrader (*Taxi Driver, Raging Bull*)—is extremely faithful to the novel, achieves much the same effects, and shares its main weaknesses. John Seale's cinematography excellently captures the primitive lushness of the jungle (the film was shot entirely on location in the U.S. and Belize), and Thom Noble's editing accentuates the frenetic pace of Charlie's life with father. The actors in the principal roles, moreover, are strikingly good. Harrison Ford captures to perfection Allie Fox's energy, wit, and charisma, and the increasing rashness and illogic with which he tyrannizes his family; River Phoenix, as the quietly decent, loyal, and brave Charlie, turns in a performance of extraordinary sensitivity and intelligence. (One is particularly impressed by his handling of the voice-over narration, with which a less gifted young actor could singlehandedly have wrecked the film.) Though her character, as in the novel, remains largely undefined, Helen Mirren, as Mother, has a very strong presence, which, alas, only makes one wonder all the more why this seemingly sensible woman permits Allie to torment and endanger her children.

Yet there are differences in tone and emphasis between Theroux's *Mosquito Coast* and Weir's. In the film, for example, Charlie plays a somewhat less active part than in the novel; among other things, Weir drastically de-emphasizes Charlie's role in saving his family during the destruction of Jeronimo, and has eliminated entirely Allie's fierce resentment of the boy afterwards. And where the novel drew a sharp contrast between Allie's compulsion to change Jeronimo and the real harmony with nature enjoyed by Charlie and his native playmates (who, while Allie remade Jeronimo in the image of an American town, gamboled half-naked in a jungle clearing they called "The Acre"), the film fails to point up this contrast; in the film, the sequence concerning the Acre is brief and confused, and the intended antithesis doesn't come off.

In the film, furthermore, the initial humor and humanity of Allie's personality are brought to the forefront; the script eliminates instances of his thoughtless cruelty to Charlie but carefully retains episodes that present Allie's funnier, more sympathetic side. When the family leaves Baltimore harbor, for example, Allie, one of whose gripes is the phony friendliness of store clerks, shouts sarcastically, "Goodbye, America—and have a nice day!" And when the Reverend Spellgood (Andre Gregory)—a missionary who is the local representative of Allie's chief rival, God, and is therefore Allie's principal antagonist in Honduras—tries to win this maverick over to the Lord with a copy of the "Blue Jeans Bible," Allie (who is extremely well versed in Scripture) holds up the dungaree-bound Good Book and says, "Look, kids, just what I've been warning you about!" Allie despises missionaries because, as he explains, they teach the natives to

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tolerate poverty and to bear their burdens stoically; he believes, on the contrary, that everything can be changed for the better, that—at least with him at the helm—the poor natives can markedly improve upon the miserable circumstances that an inefficient and uncooperative Maker has forced upon them.

For a while, anyhow, Allie seems marvelously successful in his attempt to improve upon God's handiwork. He turns the shabby little clearing of Jeronimo into a pretty town with sanitary huts, productive and mosquito-free gardens, and a happy, hard-working native population. (And even air conditioning.) The perverse symbol of his audacious challenge to God is a huge, fire-powered ice machine called Fatboy, which towers over the huts of Jeronimo and looks rather like a church. "Ice is civilization," says Allie; he is determined to bring ice not only to the town's natives but (when they begin to take it for granted) to a tribe of "pure people" in the mountains who have supposedly never seen a white man *or* ice and who he hopes will, as Charlie tells us in his narration, "see his ice as a jewel and be amazed."

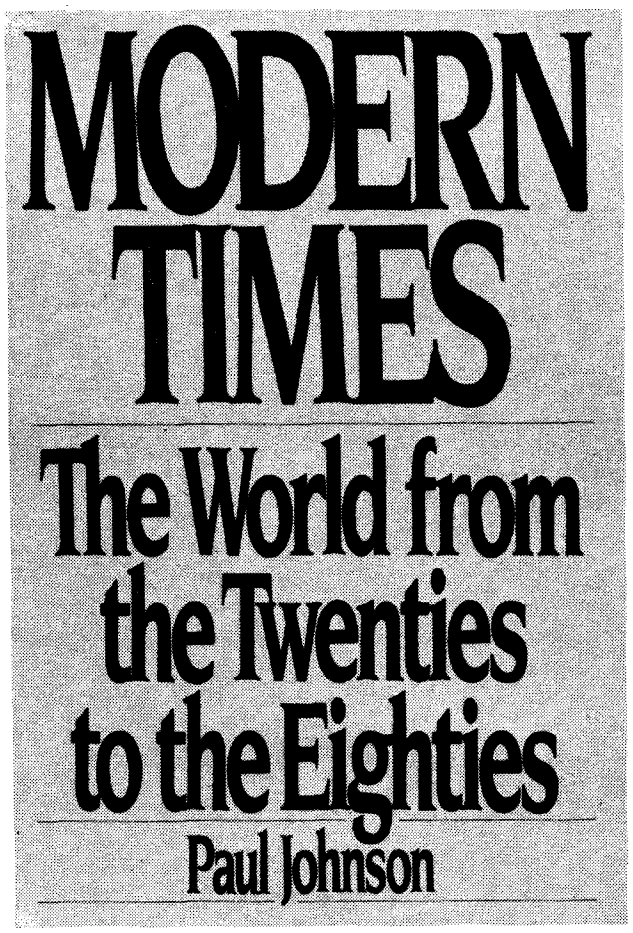
Yet by the time Allie and Charlie and their companions reach the mountain settlement with their block of ice, it has melted away; and this event marks the turning point in Allie's fortunes. Soon Jeronimo is invaded by three evil-looking gunmen, and the town is destroyed by fire, the river polluted with ammonium hydroxide from Fatboy, the native population fled into the arms of the Reverend Spellgood downriver. As the town burns, Allie howls in horror, and one is reminded of the scream at the climax of *Heart of Darkness*. But he is not demoralized for long. "I'm happy," he says. "We're free."

The fact is that Allie can't tolerate a stable, prosperous society of the sort that Jeronimo was fast becoming. Like many American protagonists before him—Natty Bumppo, Huck Finn, Sal Paradise—he is forever restless; he wants to tame a primitive landscape and create a civilization, but he doesn't want to *live* there. So, abandoning the ruins of Jeronimo and disregarding the warning of the family's native friend, Mr. Haddy (Conrad Roberts), that the rainy season will do them in, Allie takes his family to the coast and—all their money and supplies having been lost in the destruction of Jeronimo—eagerly improvises clothes and a dwelling from the rubbage scattered on the beach.

His children, who don't like their sub-native standard of living, want to return to America, but Allie lies to them, saying that they can't go back "because it's not there anymore—cataclysm—millions of Americans burned to a crisp!" In his mind, he's magnified the disaster of Jeronimo into a nuclear holocaust. And he refuses to put into any port, for that would be admitting defeat: "If it's on a map I can't use it." His failure with Jeronimo has only made him more fanatical, more of a megalomaniacal visionary; he seems to see himself now not as a seventeenth-century Pilgrim, bringing civilization to a wilderness, but as a new Adam whose goal is to recapture Eden on Earth. He tells his family, "Living in harmony with nature—that's my vision. And anybody without vision has no place here." But he is incapable of living in harmony with nature, because he is unwilling to learn anything from the natives who have been living in harmony with nature for generations.

To be sure, as Mr. Haddy predicted, the rains come and almost wash the Foxes out to sea; fortunately, however, their makeshift log-and-tarp house floats (its "hull" is marked with the Conradian word Victory) and they manage to get it back on the river and to go upstream. The family is filthy and ragged by this point, and there's no food ("I don't know when we'll eat next," Allie says with a demented smile), but it is not till he dives into the river and fails to surface for a minute or so that Mother finally breaks down and screams, "I can't stand this!"

The film's politics are somewhat contradictory, to say the least. While ridiculing the folly of which self-declared visionaries and idealists are capable, it patently intends to present Allie as an emblem of a pushy, parochial America—one that seeks to impose its values and technology upon the Third World, one that talks, talks, talks but refuses ever to listen, learn, or understand. But Allie is too erratic and inane a figure to bear convincingly the weight of such inconsistent (and, frankly, silly) political symbology. Consequently, it is all to the good that the emphasis at the close of the film is not upon political thematics or even upon the tragedy (if tragedy it be) of Allie Fox, but upon the archetypal relationship between Allie and Charlie—who, like Nick Carraway at the end of *The Great Gatsby*, emerges from the shadows of a strange, obsessive self-exile to become the real hero of the piece. Despite its paradoxical politics, then, *The Mosquito Coast* works marvelously as an allegory about the paradoxical bonds between fathers and sons. □



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TRAVAILS WITH ARNAUD

by Taki

The summer of 1967 was a bad time for me. My first wife had suddenly arrived from Paris and had more or less caught me *in flagrante* with what was still *de riguer* back then for any self-respecting Greek male, namely my mistress. Although well versed in Latin men's ways, Cristina nevertheless took it rather badly, and remained angry for the rest of the summer. (Perhaps the fact that the mistress was much older, and not anywhere near as beautiful as the wife, had something to do with it.)

Taki Theodoracopulos is the European editor of The American Spectator.

Worse, I had broken my arm in karate competition, and could only splash around in the shallow end of my pool, not to mention that my father had once again cut me off.

The only positive note of that disastrous summer was the Greek political situation. Those infamous colonels had overthrown a provisional government in a bloodless coup, and the present Greek ayatollah was in the slammer. Just about the time the colonels gave Andreas Papadoc a first-class, one-way ticket to Canada, my old man decided to give me one last chance and sent me to his New York office in charge of paper clips.

Things, however, did not work out. America was going through as bad a time as I was. Lyndon Johnson was in the White House, and worse, Ramsey Clark was attorney general. Abbie Hoffman, the convicted drug dealer, was the *numero uno* existential hero of American youth—and of the press—while Timothy Leary was openly preaching for the people to turn on, tune in, and drop out.

Needless to say, I returned almost at once to the birthplace of selective democracy, preferring the authoritarian dictatorship of dumb but well-meaning colonels to the one the great unwashed flim-flam artists of the left were imposing upon an unaware Uncle Sam.

No sooner had I landed than I was informed by my wife and father that if I didn't mend my ways by September I would find myself a bachelor, and a poor one at that.

The problem was that even if I wanted to change—which I didn't—I was as qualified for useful employment as, say, a member of Britain's Royal House of Windsor. So I sailed around the Greek islands, having one last good fling. Not surprisingly, when September arrived I had nothing to show for it except an enlarged liver, and sailed back to Athens to face the music once and for all. Or better yet, to wait for the proverbial knife to fall.

Twenty years later, I am still waiting. Mind you, the wife eventually took a walk, but for the opposite reasons. She left when I finally decided to go to work. It all happened very quickly. A friend of mine, Nico Farmakis, the first and most disastrous minister of information for the colonels, asked me to a dinner for a visiting American journalist. I remember the festivities well. Cristina and I arrived late, the King and Queen of Greece were at the next table and commented on our tardiness, Farmakis danced ceaselessly with my wife, and I chatted non-stop with Arnaud de Borchgrave, then chief foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* (and today better known as the suave editor of the *Washington Times* and a rising star on "The McLaughlin Group").

Although at first Arnaud gave me the impression that there was no more to his life than the insouciant pursuit of the perfect tan—he did have the most magnificent one I'd ever seen, even better than on those aerobic airheads of Hollywood—I soon found out how wrong some first impressions can be. He probed and asked endless questions, and even got me to take him over to meet the King. He also went through my address book and took out every name that could be of use to him one day. He was very skeptical about the colonels. "Bringing back Christian ethics is fine," he said, "but you've got to have more than just an old-fashioned creed."

Arnaud had just finished doing a Greek story and was off to Rome early in the morning. He said he'd call me when he returned, which, in view of the world media's hatred of the colonels, would be in no time. He was the first to leave, Cristina and I the last.

On my way back to our seaside villa, I told my wife how much I enjoyed meeting someone whose major preoccupation was not designer clothes. Cristina looked blank. When I told her Arnaud was a writer, she said, "Oh, is that what he does."

Back in those good old days, Aristotle Onassis owned Olympic Airways and his friends were well taken care of. (For some strange reason the company

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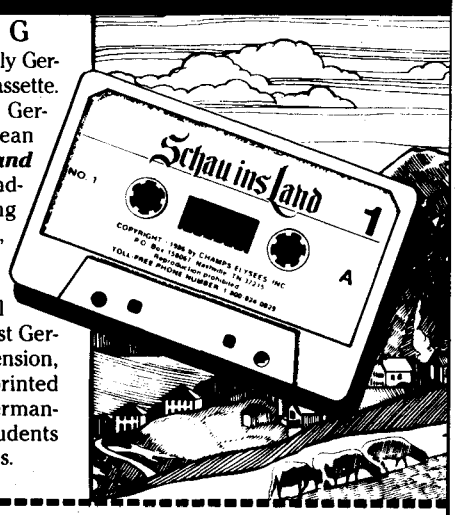

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made a profit every year until democracy was restored in Greece and the airline nationalized. It has since become a tremendous money-loser.) Sometime during the early hours I woke up and drove to the airport. I had absolutely nothing on my person except for my passport and wallet. I bought a first-class, one-way ticket to Rome and asked to be seated next to Arnaud. As Captain Renaud said in *Casablanca*, it was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Looking back, I am not sure why I got on that plane, but it must have had something to do with Arnaud dropping a hint that he could use an unemployed ex-tennis player with lots of good contacts. Which he did almost immediately.

When I informed him that I was going to drop in on Gianni Agnelli up in Villa Perosa, Arnaud began to hyperventilate.

"You're just going to drop in on him like this, no appointment, no change of clothes?"

"Sure," I told him. "Why don't you come with me? Gianni is an interesting man."

It was like showing a large bone to a very hungry dog. Once there, Gianni greeted us cordially and Arnaud immediately began pumping him for information. So much so, in fact, that Gianni's wife got suspicious and rang up Kay Graham in Washington to check if Arnaud was the real McCoy. I, needless to say, was furious. Here I was bringing into the Agnelli household the first man I knew who had a tan *and* who didn't move his lips when he read, and Marella Agnelli took him for one of her dress designer friends posing as a scribe. (Had I brought in Zipkin I would understand, but Arnaud?)

Our little visit ended in a couple of days, and two weeks later Arnaud had a cover story about Gianni, Fiat, and the problems of Italy. My position was still unclear, but I considered myself an unpaid, unofficial assistant to Arnaud, which in turn I felt gave me the right to announce to every gossip columnist I knew that I had been hired by *Newsweek* as a full-fledged foreign correspondent. Even the old man was impressed. He told a friend of his that there must be more to me than met the eye because magazines hardly ever hired people who were illiterate.

No one had hired me, of course, but I was having fun following Arnaud around the world and picking up tips. When he realized that Keats I wasn't, he insisted I buy a camera and become a Capa. This was just about the time he broke new ground by interviewing Nasser in Cairo, and then crossing the Allenby Bridge and chatting with Golda Meir. It was front-page stuff all over the world, and I basked in Arnaud's glory.

But there was trouble. Arnaud has been described as a walking ulcer because of his constant need to keep busy and his energy that borders on the manic. To use a euphemism of sorts, I like to relax. While Arnaud paced the room worrying if some head of state would call or not, I would flop out on the bed or sofa and read my books on Napoleon. This would enrage him almost as much as when I would not get out of bed in the morning, a useless exercise as I had—shall we say?—very little to do. So he devised a scheme to make me responsible. Whenever we would be in some hot spot of the world, say Cairo, he would order me to go out and photograph local color, as well as things like bridges, army barracks, and tank depots. "Get the picture, get the picture!" he would yell at me—very early in the morning.

Which in Cairo I tried to do, once. No sooner had I snapped the shutter than a howling Arab mob was after me, screaming that I was an Israeli spy. Having seen what Arabs do to a fellow when they outnumber him 200 to one, I ran straight for a police station and demanded to be arrested. But not before about ten of those towel-heads had punched me around and broken the camera. Arnaud's reaction was typical: "You mean you didn't get any pictures?"

After a while, having met lots of people who actually knew that Beethoven had not died in the Berlin blitz, I struck out on my own. The next time I saw Arnaud again was after the Yom Kippur war, which he covered from the Arab side and I from Israel. By then he had become an intimate of Sadat as well as Hussein, and had even managed to interview the Libyan version of Al Capone, Moammar Qaddafi himself.

Throughout the seventies Arnaud consistently beat the opposition, getting more exclusives than Teddy Kennedy has had blondes, but in the end the fat men who decide such matters let Arnaud go. It was a blessing in disguise, as these things usually are. He was the last of the foreign correspondents, and there's no argument about that, even from his enemies. I thought of him in November, when after his stunning coup of an interview with French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac (the one in which the craven Chirac accused Israel of complicity in the Hindawi terror plot), Chirac tried to pull a number on Arnaud in a gauche attempt to have him deny the story. The Frog should have known better. Arnaud is too old a hand, and much too well versed at the duplicity of politicians, to fall for an old trick like the one Chirac tried to pull. What amazed me was the lack of publicity that other paper in the nation's capital gave the story. Had a novelist like Woodward revealed that he was visited by emissaries from the French prime minister who offered bribes and threatened blackmail to withhold information, the story would have eclipsed the Iran scandal that broke a few weeks later.

But not to worry. If I know my old friend Arnaud de Borchgrave, he'll be back in the news soon. He always is, and for good reason. Just don't ever let him talk you into taking pictures. □

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE PARTISAN HISTORIAN

THE CYCLES OF AMERICAN HISTORY
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr./Houghton Mifflin/$22.95

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr.

The author of these sparkling essays (republished, but rewritten) is much more partisan than most other historians think proper. Whereas they see partisanship as a danger to be guarded against and try to prevent their politics from dictating their conclusions, Schlesinger sees no reason why an intelligent person like himself should suppress his political wisdom when he sits down to write history. Everything he says of the past has immediate reference to a recent or present-day partisan controversy, and the reader is never left in suspense as to what that connection might be. For a person of his intelligence, he has the least ironical of minds.

Schlesinger wears his liberal heart on his sleeve, and under his sleeve he uses his elbow to seek out abrasive contact with his Republican and conservative opponents. He has an instinct, not for the jugular but for the sore point (Nixon, Agnew, and Watergate), as if his intent were to cause maximum irritation to his opponents without running the risk of inadvertently killing them. For Schlesinger without his enemies would be without his life. Even the partisan—especially he—needs his opponents; and he needs them precisely for the sake of his partisanship. This is the unintended irony of Schlesinger's book, whose title is taken from his essay on the liberal and conservative cycles of American history.

When a historian speaks of cycles in history, he seems to step back from the partisanship of the moment and to look at it in the perspective of the whole. Indeed, if cycles are meant literally as circular returns to the beginning, the historian who speaks of them admits the relative insignificance of history, since in this view nothing historical would be lasting. At the least it would seem that partisan victories and defeats would lose their clarity, and that both triumph and despair would begin to blur. But not for Schlesinger. He uses the cycles to relieve his present suffering, nothing more. Because of them, he knows that his fellow-liberals will rise again, maybe soon. It does occur to him that thereafter they must fall again, but he draws no conclusions from this. His belief in cycles does not amount to a generous admission that his partisanship is not always appropriate, much less that he is wrong 50 percent of the time. It merely tells him why he wins only 50 percent of the time.

In Schlesinger's version, the cycles of American history alternate between "public purpose" (the liberals) and "private interest" (conservatives). But he also takes note of the obvious tension in today's conservatism between the economic conservatives who want to get government off our backs and the evangelical moralists who want (he says) to put government into our beds. Are not the latter inspired by public purpose, though misguided according to him? When it comes to foreign policy Schlesinger recognizes cycles of "extrovert" and "introvert" concern that do not quite correspond with the domestic cycles. Why not? And why is devotion to interest selfish in domestic politics but prudent in foreign affairs, while devotion to principle is noble and just at home but overbearing and officious abroad? Perhaps this question can be answered, but only by finding the virtues and vices of both interest and principle. Schlesinger does this when he wants to explain the morality of following the national interest but not when he wants to denounce the immorality of following private interest. Yet at the end of this essay, sensing this difficulty, he says that "the two jostling strains in American thought . . . are indispensable partners in the great adventure of democracy." If so, then why prefer one to the other? Why not accommodate to the time—either by listing with the wind or by adopting the policy of the Trimmer (as Lord Halifax explained it) of leaning *against* the wind? Why the heedless pursuit of partisan half-truth?

Perhaps partisans are needed, and their characteristic exaggerations should be tolerated, because they stand for principle instead of accommodation. In that case one should give conservatives their due and admit that private interest becomes a public purpose when a party is willing to lose by maintaining the cause of private interest. But Schlesinger the partisan cannot bring himself to do this. To keep *his* spirits up, he needs to show that he does not take his opponents seriously. Ronald Reagan and his supporters are just as wrong now as they were in their previous incarnations. This is the elevated view gained from Schlesinger's historical perspective.

The other main theme of the book attempts to state that meaning of America which does not operate in a cycle. Here we have a constant alternative (as opposed to a periodic alternation) between America as experiment (good) and as destiny (bad). The former is the project of the Founding Fathers, who were "realists committed, in defiance of history and theology, to a monumental gamble." The latter is self-righteous Calvinism convinced of its own godliness and divine election as a chosen people—a belief that "remains strong" in our day, Schlesinger adds ominously. We sense immediately that just as the cycle is intended to explain and contain self-interested conservatism, so this distinction has the Moral Majority for its target. Surely Schlesinger is correct to stress the difference between the Puritans and the secularism of the Founding Fathers, but to do so he understates the revolutionism of the American experiment, which was intended to be an experiment in self-government *on behalf of mankind.* America was understood to be leading a cause in the world, the cause of republicanism newly defined and greatly improved in the Constitution. To lead this cause is not to try to impose one's will on the rest of the world, as the French revolutionaries did and Communists continue to do, but it does give us a "standard maxim," in Lincoln's phrase, superior to that of other nations, in the opinion of the Founding Fathers.

Although this maxim is not derived from prophecy, it may be made compatible with Providence "with malice toward none, with charity for all," as Lincoln showed in his Second Inaugural Address. Even the cool reasoners of *The Federalist* did not forget to acknowledge a debt to Providence for advantages in the making of the American experiment that could not have been gained merely by the exercise of cool reason. Schlesinger, however, relies on Reinhold Niebuhr to

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. is professor of government at Harvard University.

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assure himself that religion is nothing but a danger to liberty. Although he opposes totalitarian regimes, it does not seem to have penetrated to the intelligence encased in his thick liberal skull that these regimes have all been officially and zealously atheistic. It is therefore completely beyond his power to perceive that the confidence in progress which was originally American and has reappeared frequently in American "progressives" is in our day to be found most strikingly in Reagan and in his fundamentalist supporters, and hardly at all in liberals like Schlesinger.

Schlesinger's loss of confidence is on view in his chapter, "Why the Cold War?" In his younger days a "Cold War liberal" if there ever was one, he now seems to be revising his opinions in response to the revisionist historians who have put the blame for the Cold War on the United States. Schlesinger repeatedly attacks these historians for attempting to describe the Cold War as a conflict of interests between traditional states. On the contrary, he says it is a clash of ideas between a messianic totalitarian state and a capitalist democracy. But this promising criticism leads him to conclude merely that assessment of blame for the Cold War is irrelevant. His indignation at the amorality of interests quails before his belief in the relativity of moral ideas. His liberalism is full of blame but silent on its own behalf. It is for "public purpose"—but which?

Schlesinger's partisan history is a refreshing change from the bloodless objectivity of many of his fellow-historians, and this book can be recommended for both its plain talk and its style. Schlesinger shows himself open to instruction from minds greater than his own, if they belong to the dead; and he reproves the vanity of historians who think they know better than the participants what the issues were. But on the whole one cannot recommend that his example be followed. If it were, we should have his shrillness without his felicity, his unfairness without his sophistication, and his vacant liberalism without his liveliness. □

WHY WE LOST THE ERA
Jane J. Mansbridge/University of Chicago Press/$9.95 paper

WHY ERA FAILED: POLITICS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND THE AMENDING PROCESS OF THE CONSTITUTION
Mary Frances Berry/Indiana University Press/$17.95

Fred Barnes

Prior to last November's election, polls showed that a state equal rights amendment was all but certain to be ratified by the voters of Vermont. Nothing shocking in that, right? Vermont is a state that's a lot more liberal than its Republican tradition would lead you to believe. Liberal Democrats routinely win there nowadays (governor, senator), and a self-described socialist is the mayor of the state's largest city, the People's Republic of Burlington. Feminists were poised to stage their first big celebration since Walter Mondale knuckled under to the National Organization for Women and named Geraldine Ferraro as his Democratic vice presidential running mate. Surprise, surprise. The amendment lost, in an election year that otherwise gave conservatives practically nothing to cheer about.

There's an old lesson, freshly told, in the Vermont result: polls about equal rights amendments lie. And they've been lying for years. In 1975, polls showed that a majority favored state ERA's in New York and New Jersey. But 57 percent voted against an amendment in New York and 51 percent voted no in New Jersey. Three years later in Florida, polls showed an equal rights amendment would win voter approval by two-to-one. It lost two-to-one. In 1980 in Iowa, a pre-election poll found that a state ERA was favored by 48 to 23 percent. On election day, it failed by 55 to 45 percent. In Maine in 1984, support for a state ERA was pegged at 62 percent in a poll taken one month before the election. But it turned out that 63 percent voted against the amendment. What happened in Vermont, then, should have been no surprise at all. It was part of a trend.

If you're following the drift, the next step shouldn't be too hard. When the national ERA was up for ratification by the states, the average poll result showed it was backed 57 to 32 percent, seemingly a rock solid majority. There was no national referendum, but it's now safe to say that the amendment wasn't really that popular. And this helps explain why the ERA failed to become the twenty-seventh amendment to the Constitution. Jane Mansbridge, an associate professor of political science and sociology at Northwestern University, writes that polls largely measure the support for an abstraction called "equal rights for women." Americans like the idea of equal rights. But the state referenda have measured something further—whether voters truly want to change women's role in this country. The answer is no. You have here what historian John Lukacs characterizes as a distinction between public opinion and popular sentiment. Public opinion is the formal, high-toned stuff. Sentiment is what people really feel. In a crunch, sentiment is what prevails.

Knocking down the myth of the ERA's overwhelming popularity is only one of the brave tasks that Mansbridge takes on in *Why We Lost the ERA*. It is an extraordinarily honest and insightful book, all the more so because Mansbridge is a feminist and a fervent backer of the ERA. The test for me of a political writer is the willingness to make tough, critical judgments about a politician or an issue that the writer supports. When Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. finds fault with President Reagan, that's no big deal. I'm waiting for a critical word about some Kennedy. Anyway, Mansbridge passes the test. She likes the ERA, but that doesn't bias her analysis. I'm only sorry that some readers may pass up her book to read Mary Frances Berry's on the same subject. Berry, a professor of history and law at Howard University, is well known as a liberal noisemaker on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. *Why ERA Failed* is better than you might expect from Berry—its history of the ratification process is useful—but Mansbridge's book is far superior. Mansbridge offers a fair and subtle account of why the ERA went by the boards, without the hysterical conservative-bashing that marks most feminist screeds on the matter.

Mansbridge denigrates neither the arguments nor the motives of opponents of the ERA. The strategy of the amendment's advocates was to talk highmindedly about equal rights, push the amendment through 38 states, and let the Supreme Court decide what it would mean in real life. For well-grounded reasons, Mansbridge writes, opponents were leery of leaving the issue in the hands of judges. "If 'equal protection' could mean busing white children to black neighborhoods, if 'due process' could bar punishing people who everyone agreed had committed serious crimes, and if the 'penumbra' of the Bill of Rights gave women a right to abortions, one did not have to be a certifiable paranoid to suppose that guaranteeing men and women 'equality of rights under the law' might turn out also to have substantive consequences that legislators who supported the Amendment had not anticipated and that many of them would have opposed," she says. ". . . It seemed, then, that the ERA would give the Court another set of words to work with." Conservatives didn't have to be male chauvinist ogres or housewives of the Marabel Morgan school to want to avoid that.

Even Phyllis Schlafly, the leader of the anti-amendment forces, gets respectful treatment from Mansbridge. "The Amendment would have been ratified by 1975 or 1976 had it not been for Phyllis Schlafly's early and effective effort to organize potential opponents," she writes. Schlafly shrewdly moved the argument from one over equal rights to one centered on the practical effects the amendment might have, such as requiring combat duty by women and weakening the family. "Once opponents turned public attention to the Amendment's effects, they were already well on their way to winning," Mansbridge says. "Their exaggerations, while incurring some costs in credibility, succeeded in making the substantive effects of the Amendment a central issue in the debate." That was enough. "Because the amendment process requires a near consensus, the opponents had only to create enough doubt about the Amendment to prevent a consensus from forming." Without Schlafly's intervention, the consensus would have formed.

Mansbridge tosses out an interesting vignette that certainly matches my experience. She found Schlafly to be very accessible. It took one phone call for

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

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Mansbridge to reach her. But "when I tried to reach [NOW President Eleanor] Smeal, it took months." Mansbridge notes that Smeal was simply "much more inaccessible to the average member than Phyllis Schlafly was." Maybe there were reasons for that, but I always found inaccessibility to be an unattractive trait. So does Mansbridge, I suspect.

Unlike the ordinary run of feminists, Mansbridge insists that homemakers weren't merely fantasizing when they concluded that both the ERA and the women's movement were not out to aid them. The amendment, after all, was a product of the movement, and the movement "was profoundly opposed to traditional conceptions of how families should be organized," she says. Feminists, from the time the women's movement began twenty years ago, have opposed homemaking as a full-time career. Indeed, this created a "genuine conflict of interest" between feminists and homemakers, one that the ERA exacerbated. "The very existence of full-time homemakers was incompatible with many goals of the women's movement, like the equal sharing of political and economic power," Mansbridge writes. "Women can never hold half the economically and politically powerful positions in the country if a greater proportion of women than men withdraw from competition from these positions." I can't argue with that.

Because of the ERA's close tie to the women's movement, homemakers were automatically skeptical of it, the author says. Furthermore, they stood to suffer tangible loss. It would deprive them of "some traditional protections and benefits," Mansbridge says. "While feminists intended to raise new and presumably better protections in place of the old, these were not strictly mandated by the ERA." Finally, women who stayed home with the kids had begun to feel *declassé*. They had suffered, partly because of the women's movement, "status degradation." And the ERA would reinforce that. Small wonder homemakers haven't lined up behind Smeal to support it.

Berry raises the possibility that the insurance industry, worried about being barred from issuing policies that are actuarily sound but make gender distinctions, was the moving force behind the effort to kill the ERA. To her credit, Mansbridge knocks down this canard. State legislators voted against the ERA "not because of massive organized lobbying by the insurance industry or large corporate contributions to their campaigns but because the cumulative impact of many influences, including district-based organizing by [Schlafly's] STOP ERA, had led them to believe that voting for the Amendment would cause them more trouble than it was worth." Mansbridge says she found "no evidence of a conscious insurance industry conspiracy to stop the ERA." Imagine that: the ERA lost fair and square. You'll never hear Eleanor Smeal say that. □

CITIES ON A HILL: A JOURNEY THROUGH CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE

Frances FitzGerald/Simon and Schuster/$19.95

William Schambra

Frances FitzGerald's *Cities on a Hill* is, in a sense, the mirror image of her earlier, Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Fire in the Lake*. The latter volume—a major contribution to the anti-Vietnam war literature—argued that the war could be understood only as part of a larger process: the destruction of traditional, backward-looking, communitarian Vietnamese society by the forcible introduction of Western capitalism and technology. *Cities on a Hill*, by contrast, examines the reconstruction of communitarian society within that great bastion of Western capitalism and technology, the United States. FitzGerald approaches her new subject through four illustrations of community-building drawn from the American experience of the sixties and seventies: the growth of the gay community in the Castro district of San Francisco; Jerry Falwell's construction of a fundamentalist Christian enclave in Lynchburg, Virginia; the development of a retirement community in Sun City, Florida; and the rise (and sudden fall) of the notorious Rajneesh commune in Oregon. Although seemingly radically disparate, the four experiences, she insists, reflect essentially the same, uniquely American belief; that communities may be built, not necessarily on tradition or by looking backward, as the Vietnamese would have it, but precisely by shattering tradition and by looking forward to a dramatically new self and society.

This argument is, unhappily, only implicit in most of the book; the case studies appeared originally in the *New Yorker*, and so the author is permitted to meander amiably through her accounts, occasionally brushing up against substantive points, but never pursuing them with an intensity that readers of the magazine would have found unseemly. Only in the concluding chapter, tacked on to the original essays, does she develop fully her thesis.

American society, she argues, is peculiarly unsettled, fluid, and atomistic as a result of modern capitalism, and therefore is constantly challenging established cultural and communitarian norms. Sometimes this challenge is particularly acute—she points to the period preceding the Second Great Awakening in the 1820s and 1830s, when technological advances disrupted established family and community customs. At such times, she suggests, we are likely to see an efflorescence of community-building efforts, all of them rejecting the old and now-discredited cultural ways, all experimenting with dramatically different and often wildly eccentric alternative cultures, but all characterized by a desire for cultural and individual regeneration and by the effort to re-establish communitarian control over social chaos. This, according to FitzGerald, explains the explosion of religious and secular communal movements during the Second Great Awakening—and, she argues, it explains a similar explosion among the American middle class during the sixties and seventies, in the wake of that period's economic, social, and political upheavals.

FitzGerald's book is a welcome rejoinder to one argument heard frequently today, that modern technological developments have rendered forever obsolete the small community. That argument is, of course, the basis for the derision that usually greets President Reagan's call for a regeneration of family, neighborhood, and local community. Although I'm certain FitzGerald would not be pleased at this suggestion, nonetheless, she shows us why Reagan's theme is by no means absurd. Communities in America, she demonstrates, form not in spite of, but precisely because of, the social changes generated by capitalism and technology. This, of course, is nothing more than a reiteration of a point made considerably earlier by Alexis de Tocqueville, who, as it turns out, visited America in the midst of the Second Great Awakening. He understood that the forces of modernity had doomed traditional, rooted communities, and he was deeply concerned about the consequences of this for mankind. The American capacity spontaneously to generate completely new but nonetheless genuine communities, without traditions or roots and out of virtual strangers, quieted his concern.

Because FitzGerald believes that all four of her case studies are equally legitimate manifestations of the American communal impulse, she struggles (and largely manages) to discuss objectively a range of cultural practices and beliefs that would have severely strained the tolerance of a lesser journalist. When she errs in this respect, the sophisticated New Yorker slips through. She clearly enjoys her work on the Castro, for instance, as she follows its fortunes through the rise and murder of Harvey Milk, and the onset of the AIDS epidemic. From her account, it seems that she tagged along happily with her pals Peter, Ken, and Armistead to virtually every gay bar, restaurant, festival, and demonstration in the district during this period.

Her treatment of the retirement village, by contrast, is stunted, detached, and relatively unenlightening. And from her description of the fundamentalist enclave in Lynchburg, one might suppose she had been transported back to the inscrutable culture of Saigon. "One family," she notes incredulously, "had not only a living room but a family room with a Naugahyde pouf, a twenty-four-inch television set, and a sliding glass door looking out over a stone-paved terrace." And, of course, it is always "Falwell"—never "Jerry."

The deeper problem with FitzGerald's approach, though, is not her failure to be objective, but her reluctance to discriminate—to make some hard, interesting judgments about the nature of community to which her own evidence points. Until recently, for instance, it was widely believed that a healthy community (no matter how otherwise new or different) necessarily emerges from, and retains an honored place for, the traditional family. Her case studies give us an opportunity to test this proposition, for two of her communities reflect this conventional understanding, and two were founded explicitly on the rejection thereof.

The gays in the Castro, for instance, renounced traditional family values in the name of a radically individualistic, and usually quite promiscuous, sexual freedom. Their community seemed to flourish on this basis—until the onset

William Schambra is co-director of constitutional studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

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of the AIDS epidemic. The only way to halt the spread of the virus, it was clear, was through sexual restraint—a value taught by, and central to, the much-despised family. But the Castro came close to self-destruction when its inhabitants refused to accept such moral strictures, preferring to cling to their bath houses, and the absolute freedom they represented. The community finally accommodated itself to the epidemic, but only after it had adopted a new life-style—one characterized, as FitzGerald notes, by committed, monogamous, long-term relationships, or, in other words, by relationships suspiciously resembling those against which gays had initially rebelled.

The Rajneesh community also rejected the traditional family, because, its Indian guru "Bhagwan" taught, man had "outgrown" it. He proposed to build a "new commune" in Oregon, which would itself be an all-encompassing "liquid family." Men and women would stay together "only as long as they loved each other" and "children would belong to everyone." Bhagwan became the "father" of this extended family, holding it in thrall with his idiosyncratic gumbo of traditional Oriental practices and New Age psychotherapeutic techniques. And Ma Anand Sheela—familiar to many from her contentious appearance on "Nightline" in July 1981—was the family's "mother."

Maintaining tight family bonds across several thousand people requires nothing short of despotism, however, as everyone has known since Plato's *Republic*, and as the hapless Rajneeshi soon rediscovered. Presumably with the Bhagwan's blessing, Sheela drugged, poisoned, and electronically eavesdropped upon her internal opposition; at the same time, she deliberately antagonized the commune's neighbors, so that she could legitimately say that Rajneeshpuram was alone and friendless in Oregon, needing more than ever to stick together. Internal and external resistance to this tyranny eventually became so great, however, that the commune collapsed.

Expanding the family principle to the level of the community as a whole destroyed Rajneeshpuram. And rejecting that principle on behalf of a radical individual freedom almost destroyed the Castro. The fatal or near-fatal flaws of both experiments, in short, were to be found precisely in their points of departure from the principle of the traditional family. Meanwhile, it must be noted, the two communities that remained faithful to the nuclear family—normally the buffer between the broader community and the individual—prospered. Not enough evidence here for firm scientific conclusions, perhaps, but enough for some interesting speculations—speculations that FitzGerald's exaggerated tolerance prevents her from making.

The only time FitzGerald's tolerance seems genuinely strained is when her subjects permit their purely communitarian purposes to be warped or distorted by the capitalist surroundings. The Castro almost lost its sense of community, she suggests, when it was overrun by trendy boutiques, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses catering to a world-wide clientele of gay tourists; Jerry Falwell clearly spends far too much time raising money for the "Old-Time Gospel Hour," and preaching to his congregation about the importance of material success; and Rajneeshpuram seemed to be losing its communal bearings when it, too, began to build boutiques, hotels, and other tourist attractions, and Bhagwan became obsessed with collecting limousines (final count: ninety-three). One detects here the same skepticism about commerce and technology to be found in *Fire in the Lake* and its accounts of the misery visited by those forces upon Vietnam.

Whatever commerce and technology did to Vietnamese community, however, we may be profoundly grateful for what they do to American communities. Those forces keep community boundaries permeable; moderating influences necessarily seep in from the outside world, and the outside world is permitted to keep a watchful eye on the workings of the group. As FitzGerald herself notes, American communities therefore cannot achieve the sort of isolation that breeds fanaticism. And this, of course, is just as the Founding Fathers of the republic planned it. They feared above all the sorts of tyrannical majorities that form in small, insulated communities, and they counted on the commercial character of their new, extended republic to soften and moderate the zeal of such groups. That our Bhagwans collect limousines, rather than the heads of infidels, is silent testimony to their success, and their wisdom. But this lesson is lost on FitzGerald, who contemptuously dismisses as corruption precisely those aspects of her communities that the Founders would have considered evidence of moderation.

The final message of FitzGerald's earlier book, *Fire in the Lake*, is a grim one: in the wake of the collapse of Vietnam's traditional communitarian society before the onslaught of modern technology, the Vietnamese people, she insists, were understandably drawn to the sort of totalitarian community proffered by the National Liberation Front. The message of *Cities on a Hill* is a happier one: Americans, she tells us, have found a way to establish new communities in the very midst of modern technological society—without resorting to the totalitarian techniques of the NLF. The reason this is open to us is that our society sustains a complex balance between technology or commerce, and community. As FitzGerald notes, community softens the harshest and most disruptive features of commerce. But, as she fails to emphasize, commerce simultaneously softens the harshest and potentially most oppressive features of community. It is the American genius to establish communities that are both new, and safe. □

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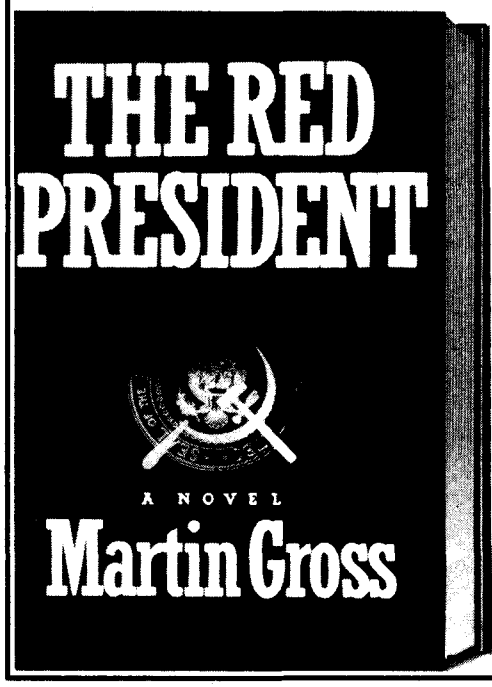

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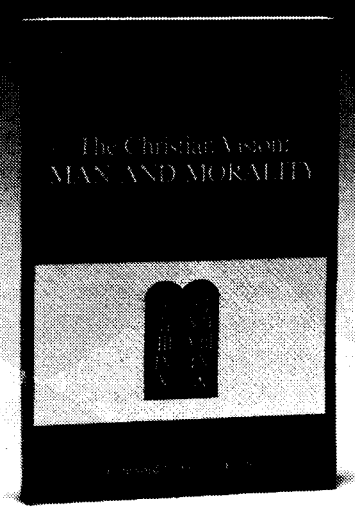

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HARD RIGHT: THE RISE OF JESSE HELMS

Ernest B. Furgurson/W. W. Norton/$18.95

Gordon Jackson

Hard Right: The Rise of Jesse Helms is another fusillade fired in the ongoing battle between North Carolina's senior senator and the liberal press, two camps that practically define themselves in opposition to each other. These latest rounds have missed their mark, however; Senator Helms emerges without a scratch from this unauthorized biography, an extraordinarily vapid and uninformed book.

Though author Ernest B. Furgurson is chief of the *Baltimore Sun*'s Washington bureau, it is his conceit that he stands outside the fray between Helms and his media antagonists. He would have it that he is an unbiased observer, something of a scientist, as it were, who confesses that since boyhood, "politicians, especially demagogues, especially southern demagogues, have fascinated me . . ." As Furgurson pursues his curiosities he discovers to his horror that this species that has amused him so, embodied perfectly in Helms, threatens the nation's constitutional underpinnings.

Anyone naive enough to expect the book really to be an even-handed treatment, or contain even a straw of sympathy for Helms, should be disabused of the notion after twelve pages. By then Helms has been compared unfavorably with George Wallace ("a warmer, more understandable human being" than Helms's aloof polyester patrician) and Joe McCarthy (a red-baiting yahoo, but no ideologue with a blueprint for America's future like the Constitution-threatening Helms).

That's all fair enough. Furgurson's entitled to his opinion. Helms has staked out the right-most position in the U.S. Senate and those who disagree with him undoubtedly have cause for concern that he will prosper. Polemics disguised as biography, and like tactics, are to be expected in these circles.

But there's little point in producing a polemic that demonstrates no substantive knowledge whatever of the policy issues with which Helms deals. Furgurson appears to be utterly unconversant with conservative arguments on any issue, and so he falls back on the old liberal conventional wisdom that conservatism is merely personality defect.

The policy questions are dealt with only obliquely. Where does Helms stand on civil rights legislation? He "has never supported a civil rights bill for those already born." In opposing sanctions against South Africa, he obviously supports "apartheid—a system devised to keep sassy black people in their place."

What of U.S.-Soviet relations? Furgurson opines that "Most international problems in our time demand a reasoned international strategy. But . . . that is hard to achieve as long as national leaders exaggerate foreign threats and thus feed popular fears." And that is that. Let's not have any inordinate fear of Communism.

The New Right social agenda—abortion, school prayer, pornography, and crime? Here Helms is found guilty of committing political philosophy. He postulates that certain values, such as the inherent worth of the individual, the primacy of strong family life and property rights, are properly seen as antecedent to civil liberties. Though this notion would be a commonplace to the Constitution's drafters, to Furgurson it reveals thinking that "will chill anyone who subscribes to the Bill of Rights and realizes that some day Helms could take part in a convention to amend the U.S. Constitution."

And what about tax policy, the argument over whether supply-side incentives to the private sector or government redistribution will elicit greater economic vitality? Furgurson doesn't seem to have heard of the debate. He casts Helms as a pawn in class warfare, a shill for big business, on whose behalf he "persuaded working people that their needs were the same as men whose economic desires were in fact wholly opposite." Let's have no nonsense about rising tides that lift all boats. (Furgurson reveals the economic illiteracy of most journalists in the remarkable sentence: " . . . Reagan, facing a sure economic recession, bowed to his advisers and reluctantly threw his weight behind . . . one of history's biggest tax increases." Someone should tell him that the recession was nearly over at the time the tax bill was passed in mid-1982, and that it would be a dizzying revelation for any economist to discover evidence that a tax increase combats recession.)

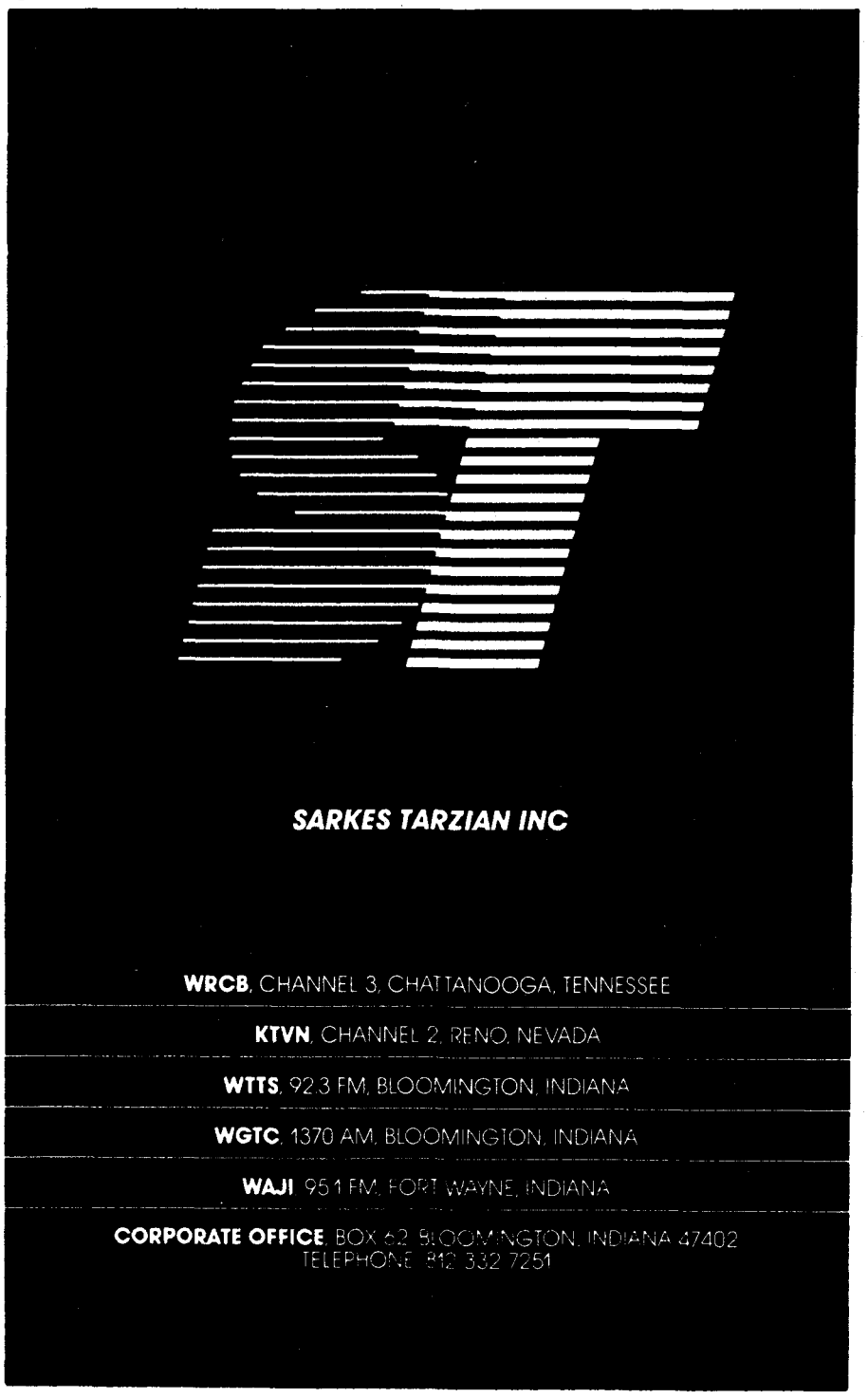
The "nobody here but us liberals" viewpoint is never put aside. Since Helms's positions are without merit on their face, there remains only the business of discovering what defects make this demagogue tick. It is part of Furgurson's purpose to do dime-store psychoanalysis on his subject, and his efforts here are quite beyond ludicrous.

Helms's animosity toward Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, can be traced, Furgurson speculates, to the time when Helms, as a Raleigh city councilman, warned city officials that King's appearance in the city might stir violence. King came and went without incident, and Helms was deeply embarrassed, the blame for which King apparently has been made to bear.

Then there was the matter of Helms's $50 donation to a church collection plate. Furgurson probes deep into the Helms psyche, and discerns that the gift may have been motivated by the Senator's gratification at having his presence acknowledged and being asked to offer a benediction.

Silliest of all is Furgurson's explanation for why Helms isn't too keen on the media. It's because the young Helms, an aspiring journalist, did not finish college and take all the requisite journalism and liberal arts courses. Had he done so, "he would have been grounded in the ethics of the business, exposed to the historical and cultural traditions on which Americans make political judgments. He would have gotten used to the questioning of common assumptions and established authority that is the very fundament of higher education." Perhaps the Senator can enroll in a few night courses at George Washington University and

Gordon Jackson, a graduate of Duke University, has written for the Wall Street Journal *and the* St. Louis Globe-Democrat, *as well as* The American Spectator.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begin to see the error of his ways.

And the liberal media Helms worries about? No such animal. Journalists, in Furgurson's experience, are only idealistic folk, a little more sensitive than the average Joe to "civil rights, civil liberties and the poor." "That fact is hard to understand—and inconvenient—for Helms, whose journalism and politics were intermixed throughout his broadcast career."

The book is nearly 300 pages of inadequate analysis and distorted facts. Two more instances merit recounting. Furgurson goes to great lengths to flesh out an indictment of racism. One of the counts is that Helms supports the *Grove City* Supreme Court decision. The only real-life incidence of alleged discrimination that *Grove City* addressed concerned how much money colleges apportioned to women athletes. But since the bill attempting to undo *Grove City*, which Helms opposes, classifies itself under "civil rights," Furgurson had no compunction about borrowing it from the feminists to use in labeling Helms a racist.

Then there's the chapter titled "Coattails II," in which it is suggested that Helms owes his '84 election to Ronald Reagan. The President no doubt helped, but the fact that Helms, supposedly anathema to blacks, received nearly five percent more of the black vote than did Reagan is rather inconvenient to the coattails theory.

Furgurson really doesn't have a clue about Helms or how to go after him. He wants to call him both a fervent, unbending ideologue and a Machiavellian, self-aggrandizing manipulator. Undoubtedly, much of the liberal community will give vigorous assent to the whole smear, but the book certainly will do nothing to damage Helms's standing among his admirers. He emerges from this hatchet job as a principled and charitable man with access to far more intellectual candlepower and political acumen than one ever suspected.

Furgurson takes after the current fashion in denigrating Helms as representative of a negative conservatism. He's against everything, always complaining, an obstruction to the important business of the Senate, the charge goes. But that should be to his credit with real conservatives. With all the "morning in America" syrup that has attended the "Reagan Revolution," it is easy to forget the hard work of reaction against bad ideas and bad policies that conservatism calls for. Helms is in the trenches doing that hard work, and he takes a lot of the heat off of Reagan and others.

This book will do him no harm. It is undoubtedly a bid by Furgurson, originally a Virginian, to join another species of Southerner as curious as the demagogue—the journalist who moves east, "grows" into liberal enlightenment, and is rewarded with celebrity status, *à la* Tom Wicker, Dan Rather, Bill Moyers, and Sam Donaldson. Furgurson begins the book with a meditation on the question of how he and Helms could have experienced similar upbringings, yet turned out so differently. The answer is that somewhere along the line Jesse Helms learned to think for himself. □

HOW NATO WEAKENS THE WEST

Melvyn Krauss/Simon and Schuster/$18.95

Steven C. Munson

For nearly forty years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has protected the countries of Western Europe from the threat of Soviet aggression. NATO has kept the peace on a continent where traditional great power rivalries and later the rise of fascist and Communist totalitarianism led to two world wars. Thanks to American defense guarantees, democracy in Western Europe has survived and prospered since 1945. Yet despite the success of the Atlantic Alliance, its future is now in doubt. Calls for U.S. troop reductions, for the withdrawal of the American nuclear umbrella, or for the outright abandonment of NATO have grown louder and more frequent, and now come from both ends of the political spectrum. From elements of the left we hear that the U.S. presence in Europe represents less a means of protection than an intrusion of American imperial power, and that the United States should get out and let the Europeans pursue their own course independent of the two "superpowers." From the right an altogether different argument is heard: that NATO has become the chief obstacle to an effective anti-Communist foreign policy, preventing the United States from meeting the Soviet global challenge and insuring its own security.

At first glance economist Melvyn Krauss, the author of *How NATO Weakens the West*, appears to fall into the second category of anti-NATO advocates. In his view, the alliance no longer serves to promote American interests, frustrate Soviet ambitions, or protect Western Europe. Like many observers, he argues that the American promise to use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet conventional attack in Europe lost all credibility when the Soviet Union achieved nuclear parity with the U.S. Since then, writes Mr. Krauss, the Europeans have been pursuing a "détente-as-defense" strategy, seeking to appease the Soviet Union in order to stave off an invasion. They have been enriching the common enemy with trade, cheap credit, and high technology. Moreover, on such issues as Poland, the shooting down of KAL 007, and Afghanistan, pressure from the Europeans has led the United States to abandon an initially tough stance toward the Soviet Union. What's worse, in exchange for European deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles, the Reagan Administration "has adopted the European policies of détente, summitry, subsidies, and arms control." Mr. Krauss contends that the U.S. chose this path rather than risk a breakdown in relations with its allies. America's obsession with allied unity, he writes, has given the Europeans a veto power over U.S. foreign policy, and because Western Europe's policy of appeasement has made it little more than a "proxy" for the Soviet Union, that

Steven C. Munson has worked for The American Spectator, *the* New York Times Magazine, *and the Committee for the Free World. He is currently News Specials Chief at the Voice of America. The opinions expressed in this review are his alone.*

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veto is now being cast in the Kremlin.

Because he thinks NATO has come to serve the interests of the Soviet Union rather than the Western democracies, Mr. Krauss concludes that the U.S. should withdraw from the alliance over a period of five years. He believes an American pullout would shock the Europeans out of their complacency about the Soviet threat and their debilitating dependence on the U.S. Much of his book is an attempt to demonstrate that Western Europe has been getting a defense "free ride" as a result of U.S. "subsidies." But Mr. Krauss is confident the West Europeans have a strong enough commitment to Western values to do what is necessary to preserve their democracies. In his view, they only need the proper economic incentives. Once the U.S. stops footing the bill for their defense, he is convinced, the Europeans will pay to defend themselves.

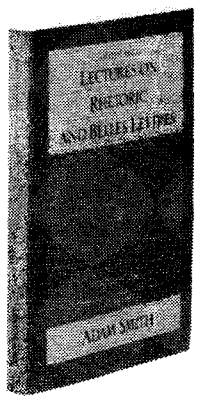
The logic of his argument carries him beyond the dissolution of NATO to the abandonment of other alliances, even those with countries that are generally supportive of U.S. policies. Thus he proposes withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea at the same time they are pulled out of Western Europe. This, he believes, would end both Korean and Japanese "defense free-riding" on the U.S., and, as with the West Europeans, lead the Japanese and Koreans to increase their military efforts.

According to Mr. Krauss, America's allies are not only unwilling to provide for their own defense; they also have no desire to resist Soviet imperialism in the Third World. Their hostility to U.S. efforts to oppose Soviet adventurism has rendered that task increasingly difficult—which makes it all the more urgent for America to abandon current alliance arrangements. If the U.S. is to contain Soviet expansionism, he argues, we can only do so alone, unimpeded by ties with reluctant allies.

Once the allies are off our back, says Mr. Krauss, containing Communism will be relatively easy. All the U.S. need do is turn to the strongest weapon in its arsenal, namely, the marketplace. The U.S. should strive to create a vested interest in the "capitalistic system" among the poorer countries of the world by giving Third World producers access to our markets and ending the flow of unproductive foreign aid to their governments. "Once capitalism spreads," he concludes, "Communism will contain itself."

Mr. Krauss's optimism on this point leads him to recommend that the U.S. forswear any reliance on the use of military force. The main reason America lost the war in Vietnam, he says, was that we sent our own troops in to do the fighting, which undermined support for the war at home and gave the North Vietnamese a tremendous propaganda victory. Our defeat in Vietnam, he writes, proves that direct U.S. military intervention cannot be effective in stopping the spread of Communism.

Nor, by Mr. Krauss's lights, should the U.S. be in the business of providing military aid to anti-Communist resistance movements, such as those now fighting in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Afghanistan. He points out that the Soviet Union has had considerable success using proxies and so-called substitute forces to extend its influence in the Third World. But such activities, he argues, can be effectively carried out only by governments that have a monopoly on power and can act in secret; they are unsuitable for a democracy like the United States. In his view, one need only look at the great difficulty the Reagan Administration has had in trying to get money out of Congress for the contras in Nicaragua to see how unrealistic it is for the U.S. to try to beat the Soviets at their own game.



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It is puzzling that someone who professes to be as worried as Mr. Krauss about the expansion of Communist power should oppose giving military aid to UNITA in Angola or the *mujahedeen* in Afghanistan. Such resistance movements make life difficult for the Soviet Union and its surrogates, enjoy indigenous support, and want U.S. help. Moreover, giving them the aid they need costs the U.S. virtually nothing. It is true that political support for aiding such causes has been lacking in the United States, but that is not, as Mr. Krauss would have it, because of some basic incompatibility between democratic institutions and a policy of arming anti-Communist guerrillas. On the contrary, what has made the pursuit of such a policy so difficult has been the widespread acceptance since Vietnam of the same ideas about the futility of using force to resist Communism that Mr. Krauss himself heartily embraces. In fact, Grenada showed that in the 1980s U.S. troops can roll back Communism and establish democracy just as they saved the Dominican Republic from a Communist takeover in the 1960s and contained Communist aggression in Korea in the 1950s. Contrary to Mr. Krauss's claims about the lessons of Vietnam, that war demonstrated not the uselessness of direct American military intervention but the folly of intervening without a clear-cut objective and the willingness to do what is required to achieve it.

If he fails to understand the true lessons of Vietnam, Mr. Krauss also fails to take account of the actual history of U.S. foreign policy over the past twenty years. Far from having been forced upon us by our European allies, "détente, summitry, subsidies, and arms control" were energetically sought by the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and have been pursued by American governments, with varying intensity, ever since. These policies persist, seemingly immune to events, largely because our political culture remains in thrall to the idea that the U.S. must learn to live with the Soviet Union rather than try to weaken or defeat it. The prevalence of the idea that we can and should reach some kind of accommodation with the Soviets—with all of its far-reaching implications—has hamstrung U.S. foreign policy far more decisively than the importunings of our allies.

To think that we can free ourselves from the grip of this idea by freeing ourselves from the burden of our alliances is to believe in an illusion. It is no less illusory to suppose that Western Europe, left unprotected by the U.S., would muster the courage to resist the Soviet Union. In recent years, the Europeans have exhibited less and less of that virtue, even as more and more Americans have expressed an unwillingness to go on defending them. The Europeans' refusal to stand up to the Soviets springs not from a desire to save money—as Mr. Krauss insists—but from a growing loss of appreciation for the value of their democracies. Although the prospects are gloomy, their spiritual and moral decline, like our own, could yet be reversed. But once the nations of Western Europe were left to face, individually and alone, the overwhelming military power of the Soviet Union, they would almost certainly continue down the path of accommodation.

Mr. Krauss's prescriptions for U.S. policy would lead us further down the same path. Unfortunately, free trade is likely to be no more successful in stopping Communist aggression, subversion, terrorism, and insurgency than it has been in putting an end to war—the dream of its most radical enthusiasts a hundred years or so ago. That being the case, Mr. Krauss's ideas about the use of military power amount to a call for a retreat into isolation and inaction.

Over the past several years, a noticeable convergence of left and right opinion has taken place on the issue of restraining the use of American power. Mr. Krauss's blend of economic determinism and anti-interventionism is further evidence of that trend. While he claims to repudiate the appeasers and accommodationists, his views on America's role in the world are virtually indistinguishable from the prevailing left-wing orthodoxy that has done so much to advance the cause of accommodation to Soviet power both here and abroad. □

THE OXFORD BOOK OF BRITISH POLITICAL ANECDOTES

Edited by Paul Johnson/Oxford University Press/$17.95

Herb Greer

There is bound to be a certain variation of quality in any anthology, but the entries in this one vary more widely than most, prompting these questions: What does the editor really mean to give the reader? And then what *does* he give him? Paul Johnson gives a reply to the first question, or at least hints at one, in the opening paragraph of his introduction. He says flatly, "Anecdotes are a source of valuable historical truth." I will come back to this. A superficial answer to my second question would list a motley assemblage of scraps—excerpts from published history; apocryphal incidents (King George V's statement that he would make his children fear him); resurrected bits of journalism and memoirs from people like Fanny Burney; "sayings" (e.g., Wellington's famous "publish and be damned"); and occasional chitchat which might have been swapped over the cigars and port, after the ladies had left the room. Some of it is dull, much of it will be very obscure to the American reader not versed in British history, and there are passages here and there which can raise a coarse chuckle.

Two of London's most serious newspapers, the *Times* and the *Sunday Times*, led their reviews with one of these last bits, a tale from John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* of how the Earl of Oxford broke wind in the presence of Queen Elizabeth I and, "abashed and ashamed," exiled himself for seven years. On his return the Queen "welcomed him home, and sayd, My Lord, I had forgot the Fart." Neither critic mentioned that this story can be found in *The Arabian Nights*; a luckless fellow commits the same offense on his wedding night, while his wife is removing her veils. He too flees for seven years. When he comes back, after dark, he overhears a woman telling her child that it was born "on that night when Abu Hassan brake wind." The poor devil, seeing that "verily my fart hath become a date," leaves again, never to return. It is a funnier version than Aubrey's and is probably one of those jokes (like the one about buying a grave to use for just three days) that crossed many frontiers and attached itself to many people. In the case of Elizabeth I, *si non e vero, e ben trovato*, but what does it have to do with valuable historical truth?

Paul Johnson's introduction suggests that he is not too concerned with *literal* truth. He gives his anecdotes "the benefit of the doubt: true (at least in spirit) until proved false." This is a large qualification, like a defense of those Hollywood bio-pics that claim to "catch the spirit" of some famous personage or other, but are really meant as light entertainment. If this were true of Johnson's anthology it would bring the book closer to the original of the genre, the *Anecdota* of Procopius, which assembled scandalous stories and backstairs gossip from the court of Justinian in order to *épater* his readers and attack the empress Theodora—more like today's *Ici Paris* or the *National Enquirer* than serious historical discourse.

Such material is scattered through *The Oxford Book of British Political Anecdotes*, with politicians and other establishment figures showing great flair for non-political activities such as lechery, gourmandizing, giving birth, extra-marital passion, idle chatter, and the like. A more accurate title would have been *Anecdotes of the British Ruling Class*.

Some of these scraps are very entertaining and civilized, and do cast a clear light on politics, like another glimpse of Elizabeth I:

> The Queen seeing Sir Edward Dyer in her garden, looked out at her window and asked him in Italian, "What does a man think of when he thinks of nothing?" Sir Edward (who had not the effect of some of the Queen's grants as soon as he had hoped and desired), paused a little, and then made answer, "Madame, he thinks of a woman's promise." The Queen shrunk in her head, but was heard to say, "Well, Sir Edward, I must not confute you. Anger makes dull men witty, but it keeps them poor."

→

Herb Greer is an American writer and playwright living in England.

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Not many of the anecdotes rise to that level, and a fair number of them are much too far below it. Not only are they culled from well-known sources (the word "anecdote" suggests something unpublished, new, surprising), but they are simply trite and—unforgivable in such a collection—boring. It is hard to imagine why any reader, British or American, would care to plow through a turgid account of how Disraeli lied to the House of Commons about asking Sir Robert Peel for office (it is hardly a revelation to acknowledge that politicians lie); it is merely irritating to read about a legendary, eloquent speech by Richard Brinsley Sheridan that was, alas, never transcribed; and very hard to stoke up interest in the attempted impeachment of an eighteenth-century governor of Bengal, even as told by Fanny Burney.

Now and then the snippets become positively exasperating. There is, for instance, a fine account of the parliamentary quarrel over the French Revolution between Charles James Fox and Edmund Burke, and how it destroyed their friendship. It is a brilliant portrayal of how the greatest political issues and figures can be swayed by something as trivial as an ill-judged exuberance. But the effect is spoiled by the sequel, as told by the son of Burke's friend Therry (I give the whole "anecdote," no. 122):

> After the debate concluded, my father accompanied Mr. Burke home. In the carriage, Mr. Burke observed stern and inflexible silence; after their arrival he only replied to questions in harsh and abrupt monosyllables. Gradually a strong fit of passion came over him; he threw up the windows of the apartment, flung open his waistcoat, and in a paroxysm of passion paced up and down the room until nearly 4 o'clock in the morning.

Why is so much space in this anthology given to that species of shaggy-dog stuffing? It points either toward haste—odd for a collection that was commissioned in 1979 and published this year—or it indicates a blindness to tedium and anticlimax that is unexpected in a writer as acute and powerful as Paul Johnson. The presence of so much dross, plus hackneyed tales like that of Sir Walter Ralegh, his cloak and the puddle, is the more annoying because of the good stories it crowded out. Johnson might have included, for example, the exchange between Winston Churchill and Lady Astor, in which she declared that if she were his wife she would poison his coffee; his reply was that if he were her husband he would drink it. Another absent tale, cited in the London *Observer*, recounts how the late Victorian Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone installed a fireproof cabinet in his home, to contain letters marked "burn this." Yet another has Churchill saying to Stalin that he likes goldfish, whereupon the dictator suggests that the Prime Minister might have some for breakfast.

And so on. But every anthology leaves out some good things. Coming back to the main point, what about the editor's pretensions for his choice as "a valuable source of historical truth"? What sort of historical truth does one look for in a collection like this, spanning centuries and focusing on a relatively narrow stratum of a nation, i.e., its ruling class? There ought to be hints of the virtues in these figures, and so there are. We see wit, generosity, shrewdness, strength, humor, adroitness in the handling of people, and a certain indomitable temper. But much more often we see the establishment as ruthless, cruel, stupid, given to fornication, gluttony, and intemperate boozing, greedy for office, depressingly shaken by pure chance and all the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to—and frequently as dull as ditchwater. The brighter facets only serve to emphasize the main thrust of the text, which is reductive, much like Procopius dragging out the nasty underside of Justinian's court.

If this collection was really to do with politics, that would all be fair enough, though a bit cynical. Even if it were confined to politicians, the prevailing cynicism about that profession would justify the approach more or less on a popular level. But, as I have said, the actual subject is neither politics nor just politicians, but the class who filled out the oligarchies which ruled Britain until it began to become a real democracy in this century, and to some extent still do rule the country, though changed in personnel and background. Naturally it is amusing—for a while—to see the mighty caught up in the biological squalor which their weakest parts share with the rest of us. Even this does not necessarily make them into people "like you and me." In the great and the highly placed, lechery, gluttony, even flamboyant slobbishness can represent a special exuberance, an excess of energy which marks out exceptional men and women. Some of the swinishness in this book does have that flavor, showing that Sheridan, for example, can still be witty even when being pulled drunk out of a gutter. But there is so much of it that is ordinary, which betokens that glum contempt for anyone in authority which is so fashionable among certain journalists and so-called intellectuals of the liberal left in America and Britain—very odd company indeed for someone like Paul Johnson.

More important, this is simply not very interesting, because it does not touch on the salient question about those who rule: what is it that *makes* them extraordinary, and places them above the common run of human beings? It is all very well to comfort the groundlings by stressing the gonadal and other weaknesses which their leaders share with everyone else; but the essential truth about real leaders is that they are outstandingly *not* like everyone else.

The anthology form is peculiarly suited to explore such matters, and, judging from Paul Johnson's introduction, he is conscious of this. Where his collection points up this "historical truth" and reveals the qualities in its subjects that make them into rulers, the reading is entertaining, and useful enough to supplement anyone's view of history. My complaint is that too much of the book moves in just the opposite direction. □

THE UNDYING FLAME

Ellen Garwood/The American Studies Center/$14.95

Reid Buckley

Any book written by a pen of the female persuasion bearing such a title as this at once brings on flushes of what in Spain is called *alipori.*[1] The writing is sure to be embarrassingly amateurish, effusive, and adoring of its subject: Mariano Moreno, the Argentine patriot who was the driving force behind the successful May 1810 uprising by the province of Buenos Aires against Spain.

Well, this is indeed a hagiographic life of a remarkable patriot, and there are passages—egregiously, there are mannerisms of style, such as Mrs. Garwood's frequent and abrupt shifts from past to present tense, in a clumsy attempt to simulate historical immediacy—that will cause readers to wince: despite which, the book strikes this reader as being a meticulously researched study that evokes the political life of Buenos Aires at the turn of the nineteenth century with a fine eye for the vivid detail, chronicling the convoluted dramatic events of that precarious revolution with verve. It's a good job.

But this is not the point to make about the book. We know so little about our neighbors to the south! Had you heard of Mariano Moreno? I hadn't. Hidalgo, Simon Bolivar, San Martin, but . . . Moreno? He could be described as, rolled into one, the Tom Paine, Patrick Henry, John Randolph, and James Madison of his country. Without him Argentina's bid for independence never would have prospered, yet there is no mention of the man under the general heading of Argentina in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Under "Moreno, Mariano," there *are* two hundred unilluminating words that briefly allude to the essay in economics for which he became famous. In my *Columbia Encyclopaedia*, a shameful 161 words are meted him. Incredibly, no mention at all is made of *La Representacion de los Hacendados* ("Landowners' Petition"), in which landmark essay Moreno set forth lucid and powerful arguments against the mercantilism that was practiced by Spain to the disadvantage of her American colonies.

The *Representacion* was published in 1809, one year before Moreno joined the junta that was to oust the Spanish Viceroy. He was thirty-one at the time, a lawyer with a reputation for defending the interests of the underdog. Born into a lower middle-class Creole family of pure Spanish descent (his father was a petty bureaucrat), he grew up in a conventional and very Catholic environment. He was himself conservative in all inclinations, religious, social, and political, but he had read Adam Smith, Rousseau (there are good things to be said about Rousseau, which one tends to forget in this age when the influence of his thought has been mostly baleful), Filangieri, Bacon, Locke, and, according to Mrs. Garwood, Montesquieu. He had read and admired Jefferson's writings, and he liked to quote from Fenelon's *Telemachus*, "to love your family better than yourself, your country better than your family, and humanity best of all."

He lived this romantic creed—never mind our twentieth-century cynicism. Disciplined, intelligent, possessing what Mrs. Garwood would describe as

[1]The word signifies one's anguish over the fool that someone else is making of himself.

Reid Buckley is a novelist and founder of the Buckley School of Public Speaking in Camden, South Carolina.

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an "ardent" temperament, he was lucky to capture the attention of Brother Cayetano Rodriguez, a perspicacious Franciscan who helped cultivate in the young scholar generosity of spirit and the notion that he was marked by Destiny. His family wanted Mariano to become a priest, to which end he was enrolled in the University of San Francisco Xavier, far off across the Andes. It was there that he consumed the works of the French Encyclopaedists, most of which were forbidden by the Inquisition, but to which he was given access under the indulgence of Canon Don Mathias Terrazas, a friend of Brother Rodriguez, with whom Moreno put up. He read also Jovellanos and Campomanes, the Spanish liberals; Bossuet; Fleury; and the anti-clerical ex-Jesuit Guillaume Thomas Raynal (*History of the Indies).* Maybe the most important influence on him—I conjecture—was Garcilasso de La Vega's *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, which is fascinating to this day, and from which Moreno may have conceived his sympathy for their wretched descendants.

History, he became aware, had not begun with the Conquest. He abandoned the idea of entering the priesthood, reading law instead.

By 1805 he was back in Buenos Aires, a hardworking barrister who dared to challenge church and state on behalf of his clients. Appointed legal adviser to the *Cabildo*, the municipal council, his influence grew. Meanwhile, two British invasions of Buenos Aires, in 1805 and 1806, were repulsed, nourishing in the Creole population a spirit of nationhood. Moreno joined the Club of Seven, a close, semi-subversive group of firebrands whose passion was free trade. With the 1809 publication of *La Representacion de los Hacendados*, he achieved notoriety. "There are some truths so evident that one insults reason with the pretense of demonstrating them," he wrote, demanding an end to economic exploitation. "Yet the freedom of American commerce has not been prohibited as an . . . evil, but has been ordered as a sacrifice by the colonies for the benefit of the mother country," warning, "It was not the excess of riches . . . but rather the excess of oppression which made the English colonies revolt . . ."

Eight months later he was to help form a junta that took over the government of Buenos Aires disingenuously in the name of Ferdinand VII, the Napoleon-deposed King of Spain, but that scarcely bothered to conceal its true intent. "Spain is extinguished," declared Moreno with the succinctness for which he was renowned. Officially he was just one of two secretaries, but he ran the show. He planned the strategy and organized the military defense of the beleaguered new state. His were the orders that doomed rebels against the junta's authority to the firing squad, including the French-born commander who had been the hero in the resistance to the British. He founded the national library. Through the *Gaceta de Buenos Aires*, a bulletin of affairs of state that he also founded—a kind of *Congressional Record*—he ridiculed opponents and promulgated a whole set of civil laws whose compass would have done Lycurgus proud, doing his best at the same time to fend off retrogade schisms within the junta.

By December of 1810, Moreno was burned out. When the junta voted over his objections to admit into its body members from the old Cabildo, he resigned, accepting from President Saavedra (a faint heart and an enemy) a trade mission to England, embarking in January of 1811. He fell ill, dying on the high seas in the arms of his worshipful brother Manuel.

The Latin penchant for melodrama makes us Anglos squirm. Manuel Moreno records that Mariano expired with the words, "Even though I die, may my *patria* live!" Well, maybe he did say that. One recalls with irony the alleged last words attributed half a century later of the half-mad, patriot Paraguayan dictator, Francisco Lopez, who, drawing his sword as the Brazilian lancers ran their steel through him, is supposed to have cried, *Muero con mi patria!*—"I die with my country." Which was some part of the truth, the man's hubris having brought Paraguay almost to extinction in the course of the most brutal and sanguinary conflict the New World has known. The long perspective applied to South American history, when contrasted against the idealism and high hopes that attended Independence, disheartens. It was probably lucky Moreno died when he did. Before his fall he betrayed that nascent pride, inflexibility, intolerance, paranoia, and ruthlessness that curse so many South American heroes and leaders, who as they grow old in power grow worse in vice. Moreno was nevertheless, exceptionally, incorruptible. He did not covet power for its own sake. He did not steal. The freedom from Spain's mercantilism that he sacrificed his health to was soon abandoned as an economic principle. Argentina, like Peru; like Venezuela; like Mexico, went from one species of economic imperialism to several others, corporate, plutocratic, and fascist. Moreno deserves to be remembered for his personal honor and his intellectual sagacity. □

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 9)

Just because some tenets of liberalism are not currently popular should not suddenly convert conservatives into populists or democrats. This is the mistake of the New Right, while the neoconservatives have carried "democratic values" with them from their former careers as liberals. This has opened a Pandora's box that has plagued the execution of both domestic and foreign policies. The point to remember is that since the values embodied in conservatism are worth fighting for under any particular form of government, they must be considered more important than any particular form of government. No conservative worth his salt could or should depend on the opinion polls or the division of congressional seats to tell him right from wrong, wisdom from folly.

—William R. Hawkins
The South Foundation
Knoxville, Tennessee

Chester E. Finn, Jr. replies:
Anyone who doesn't start with a deep and abiding affection for and belief in democracy has no standing, in my view, to participate in the conversations about "cultural conservatism"—or about much else!

There is, however, some truth to Mr. Kunkel's letter!

You deserve a factual look at. . .

Aid to Israel:
Does the American taxpayer get his money's worth?

It is quite true that Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. aid. In fiscal 1985, the amount was $3 billion. Of that, $1.8 billion was for military aid, and $1.2 billion was for economic aid. Israel, however, paid $1.1 billion in 1985 to the U.S., leaving a net balance of $1.9 billion.

Is that a good deal for the American taxpayer? Do we get our money's worth?

What are the facts?

■ Israel's dominant military and political position in the Middle East protects that entire area, including the oil fields of the Persian Gulf, from the inroads of the Soviet Union. Israel has one of the best armies in the world. It is a most reliable partner in the promotion of Western interests and in the stabilization of the Middle East. Twenty-five to 30% of its budget goes for defense—as against 7% in the U.S. and less than 1% in Japan. Israel's navy and air force are the major deterrent forces in the eastern Mediterranean against Soviet intrusion.

■ Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank, without having a single American soldier stationed in its territory. Still, the superb military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, the advanced medical facilities, the equipment and food storage capacity, and the trained manpower to maintain and repair sophisticated U.S. equipment, are instantly at hand in Israel. It is the only country in the area that makes itself available to the United States, in any contingency.

■ There is no other country in the Middle East except Israel that can be considered to have a stable government or populace friendly to the United States. There is much danger that any military aid to Arab countries, and military equipment given or sold to them, will suffer the fate as the untold billions of dollars and priceless military secrets that were lost to our enemies in the debacle of Iran. Is Saudi Arabia more stable? Egypt? Jordan? Judge for yourself!

■ Only a fraction of the aid given stays in Israel. By far the largest share remains in the U.S., where it is spent with American defense contractors. Peter McPherson, administrator of the Agency for International Development, estimates that every billion dollars of aid to Israel creates 60,000 to 70,000 jobs in the United States.

■ Compared to the $1.8 billion military aid to Israel, the U.S. has so far contributed $130 billion in the support of Western Europe through NATO, and $30 billion for the security of Japan, Korea, and the Far East. 340,000 U.S. troops are stationed with NATO—30,000 U.S. troops in the Far East. Not one single U.S. soldier needs to be stationed and put at risk in Israel. In contrast, U.S. naval, air, and land forces totally shield Japan. U.S. military analysts estimate that the U.S. would have to spend the equivalent of $150 billion a year in the Middle East to maintain a force equivalent to Israel's.

President Reagan said it well: "The fall of Iran increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can fully rely". American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain.

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Unscrewing the Unscrutable

After reading Stephen Schwartz's review of Ken Kesey's *Demon Box* (*TAS*, November 1986), I found myself wondering if he had actually read the book. Certainly, in his frothing frenzy to debunk Kesey and all he (purportedly) stands for, Schwartz shows no evidence of having thought seriously about what he read.

I found *Demon Box* to be a wonderful portrayal, commentary, and satire on the sixties remnants who travel to all corners of the earth in search of "enlightenment," but forget to look in their own back yard; who seek to find cosmic meaning in monsters hidden in their subconscious minds, but encounter only rusty 50-gallon drums in farm ponds, etc., etc. In one vignette after another, Kesey holds a mirror for those of us, now middle-aged, who celebrated or endured the sixties, so we can see how ridiculous we were, and occasionally still are. That he sees himself in the mirror as well is an act of artistic courage and integrity: if the book stopped there, it would still be of considerable literary value.

What makes the book exceptional, however, is the way in which Kesey integrates all the stories, shapes all these characters from his life and imagination, to address the same question that has haunted his work since *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*: Does life have meaning? The title of the book, through the metaphor it embodies, is the common thread linking all the anecdotes, poems, and essays. Is the demon box we call life going anywhere? Or is it just running down? Is God (and the Demon in the box) subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics? This is the same question Kesey asked in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*, and asked once again with marvelous artistry here.

Mr. Schwartz implies that Kesey can no longer cope with mentally ill people. Yet, it is the craziest of characters in his new book who addresses this question. I will leave readers to discover the process through which this happens, for it is a joy worth digging for.

In short, if Mr. Schwartz got little from the book, it is because he put little effort into it.

Kesey's only problem remains, as his father told him, that he "keeps on trying to unscrew the unscrutable." Let us hope he never loses this tendency. We need artists such as him, or we shall all remain trapped in the demon box of intellectual and academic cynicism. I'll take the farmer!

—Steve Brown
Manchester Center, Vermont

Stephen Schwartz replies:
Mr. Brown accuses me first of not reading the book I reviewed, and then of not understanding it. I certainly did read the book, and must say I am little the better for it. Several times, while ploughing through it, I asked myself if such toil was worth a reviewer's fee. I finished the task out of a sense of duty to *TAS* and the eminent Mr. Tyrrell.

But it is obvious that the gap between Mr. Brown's perception of Kesey and mine will never be bridged. If there has been a lack of understanding here, I really believe it is on his side, not mine. Mr. Brown seems incapable of understanding how obvious the flaws of Kesey's book are, and how bathetic his claims to greatness for it sound today. In the end, Mr. Brown's letter is a fine example of the terrible damage Kesey and Co. have wrought in the American intelligentsia.

I found *Demon Box* almost entirely lacking in a satirical sense, and certainly without the humility and contrition that is, I think, appropriate in Kesey's case, given the extent of his sociopathic activities. And these activities have hardly ended. As I write this reply, Kesey is appearing in San Francisco, at museums, libraries, and rock clubs, as well as bookstores, reenacting his drug-bus adventures and once again celebrating a chemical oblivion. It is all really quite appalling. And for me the conundrum of the "demon" in the "box," as a symbol of the mind, is simply inane. Certainly, insights as to "where the human mind is going" cannot be taken seriously from those whose whole mode of existence is based on the abolition of the mind.

Many years ago, I am told, the American critic Leslie Fiedler gave a lecture in New York where he defended drugs as harmless, if not "good for the mind." At the event, the writer Lionel Abel is said to have risen and declared, "No, Leslie, you know you're in favor of drugs because they're *bad* for the mind." Next to Kesey, Fiedler looks like a real giant of our intellectual life.

The Great Blueprint

I found Bryan F. Griffin's cynical essay, "The Great Fear of 1986" (*TAS*, December 1986), a possible blueprint for extremism. It is just this sort of "courage born of faith" which confers spiritual invincibility and justifies "righteous" acts, like driving a car bomb into a Marine compound.

I'm sure Rev. Richard Girnt Butler, who preaches white supremacy, believes in "a faith in the value of tribulation itself, a faith in the propriety of the ultimate unseen outcome, a common understanding that, in the long run, suffering [is] a good thing for all concerned." And I'm sure Louis Farrakhan would agree.

—Irwin Chusid
Montclair, New Jersey

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CURRENT WISDOM

Washington Post

Funeral services performed once again on a favorite corpse by Pastor Lou Cannon of Washington's Church of Good Scriveners:

When President Reagan rededicated the Statue of Liberty in a blaze of light and celebratory fireworks last July 3, he seemed to personify the American nation, which he described that night in Lincoln's words as "hope for the world, future for all time."

In a week of tall ships and remembrances of patriots past, Reagan captured the imagination of a nation accustomed to his heroic turn of phrase and reassuring ways. A romanticized portrait of Reagan appeared on the cover of Time magazine the following week accompanied by a caption that asked, "Why is this man so popular?" The cover story described Reagan as "a Prospero of American memories, a magician who carries a bright, ideal America like a holograph in his mind and projects its image in the air."

All the glitter is gone now, all the magic lost.

[December 21, 1986]

The Nation

Whilst on another of her strenuous fact-finding missions to foreign parts, the *Nation*'s shapely Washington correspondent, Christabel Hitchens, is again diverted:

Cut now to Silom Road. This Bangkok thoroughfare is full of cliches, such as limbless beggars sprawled outside gleaming banks. Just off the main drag, in a street market above a video store, is the headquarters of Empower, Bangkok's only feminist union. The women at Empower have set themselves the immense task of improving the condition of the "bar girls."

[November 29, 1986]

Village Voice

Choice droppings from one of the incomparable *Voice*'s resident social dissectors:

On the sitcom, in fact, one is obliged to undercut oneself along with everybody else. And this subversive process betrays the self-destructive tendency of the social Darwinist ideal—that jungle ethic which has always given aid and comfort to the well-fixed champions of laissez-faire, and which is now respectable again. The aggression that motivates or undercuts each sitcom character in turn reflects the real aggression that pervades the corporate state, wherein every man and woman must "look out for Number One." And yet these apparent struggles for preeminence do not create heroic individuals, or permit any individuality at all. On the sitcom, what seems like a relentless effort on the part of each to triumph over all the rest is an effort not at self-definition or self-promotion, but at self-cancellation. The aim of each is merely to survive as yet another particle of the watchful and ironic mass.

[December 7, 1986]

Chicago Tribune

The venerable *Tribune* prints two bulls by two dispensers of bull paddies:

Remove God?

Chicago—In the United States of America we should swear by our Constitution and discard religious impositions.

We are not one nation under "God"; those two words were added by religious zealots, imposing their theories on the rest of us, and obscure the fact that other nations also see themselves as being under "God."

—Miguel Garcia

'No truth in it'

Des Plaines—There is not an iota of truth in the letter about the vicious circle of Hindus killing innocent Muslims and Christians.

I am a Christian and have been living in Hindu India for the last 35 years and have never been persecuted for my religious or political beliefs and still take my vacation and go back to that Hindu India and enjoy my freedom as in the United States. Of course, there is religious factional fighting but not more than happens anywhere in this country between blacks and whites, fundamental Christians and liberals or abortionists and anti-abortionists.

—George Francis

[November 4, 1986]

New Republic

In his little sailor suit with his patent leather shoes sparkling in the sunshine, young Michael Kinsley proffers a knock-knock joke to mommy and daddy:

The only irritating aspect of the otherwise delightful collapse of the Reagan administration is the widespread insistence that we must all be poker-faced about it. The *Washington Post*, second-to-none in moral dudgeon over the Reaganites' misdeeds, nevertheless declares that anyone who enjoys or is entertained by the spectacle is "reprehensible," no less. The approved attitude is to don the mask of tragedy: oh, woe is us, another failed administration, policy-making in disarray, etc. . . . Dry those tears and repeat after me: Ha. Ha. Ha.

[December 22, 1986]

The Progressive

Dr. Alan Wolfe of Queens College in New York enlightens perplexed readers of the illustrious *Progressive* as to why the conservative intelligentsia are now rampant on campus and in the media:

Conservative ideas are popular today because intellectuals, like the rest of us, are faddish. We have not thought through the failure of "liberalism" and replaced it by a new "conservative" consensus. Instead, mouthing certain ideas now, as it was twenty years ago, is the way to foundation grants, let alone power. I only wish that ideas came first and power after, but nothing I have seen in the rise of the Right convinces me that such is the case.

[November 1986]

Seattle Times

In the howl section of an illustrious Seattle gazette, a local turkey speaks out on behalf of her less articulate brothers and sisters:

Our history books tell us that the colonists made peace with the Native Americans, and together celebrated the first Thanksgiving in 1621. There is some doubt as to whether this event actually took place, but Native Americans had a long-standing tradition of holding large feasts in thanks to the Great Spirits who sent them a good harvest. The settlers may have picked up the idea of "Thanksgiving" after being invited to one of these feasts.

What is well-documented, however, is what Thanksgiving became to the settlers. Apparently, a "thanksgiving" was celebrated after massacres of Native Americans. One Thanksgiving was proclaimed by Governor Kieft in February 1644 after one such massacre.

Today, Thanksgiving remains linked with bloodshed. Each year, tens of millions of turkeys are slaughtered in an unintentional echo of past massacres. Their lives prior to slaughter are the mere shadow of a frustrated existence, short in duration and severely restricted by modern "factory farming" conditions. . . .

[November 17, 1986]

New York Times Book Review

Dr. Stanley Hoffmann offers another reading from Progressive Scripture:

The Cuban revolution has a remarkable record in such fields as health and education, both at home and abroad where a huge Cuban assistance program in these domains operates throughout much of the third world.

[November 30, 1986]

Washington Post

Another intellectual tour de force with the learned Professor Colman McCarthy, who apparently has found a willing female economist somewhere, somehow:

In the context of honoring excellence—the yearly mission of the Nobel Prize givers—the Swedish selection committee again leaves the world wondering: What excellence? The committee has a record of boners, from bestowing the peace prize on Henry Kissinger to ignoring such economists as Barbara Ward, E. F. Schumacher, Robert Heilbroner, John Kenneth Galbraith and Gar Alperovitz. The economics prize, established in 1969, has been won or shared by 24 people. All have been white males and all but one—a Russian—have been Westerners from capitalist nations.

Apparently the Swedes who hand out these awards to honor the memory of the inventor of dynamite have not troubled themselves to read female or Third World economists. It is women and the poor who suffer disproportionately from economic violence created and perpetuated by Western powers.

[October 25, 1986]

The Progressive

Still more *hilaritas*, and from a comic who sees nothing amusing about a girl's dream of competing on the boys' Graeco-Roman wrestling team:

I know some of you humorless old lefties think we shouldn't gloat publicly over Reagan's difficulties. Listen, my momma may have raised a mean child, but she raised no hypocrites. I love this. I can't wait to read the papers every morning. I'm entitled to this satisfaction. It has not been easy to be anti-Reagan in Texas for the last six years. Damn right, I'm gloating.

[January 1987]

Christian Century

On the pages of a great atheistic sheet, hopeful tidings of an analytical nature from a gal with her hands full:

A similar challenge came from Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, who raised the question of what rules we would make for a just society if we had no idea what place we personally would occupy in such a society. She urged participants to move beyond the wrongs suffered by individual women and to see the systemic interrelatedness of all patriarchal oppression, including sexism, racism, classism, compulsory heterosexism, enforced motherhood and militarism. She suggested that one should go forward with the Bible in one hand and serious systemic analyses in the other.

[September 10-17, 1986]

Commonweal

Three years and ten months into America's longest period of economic recovery in the postwar era and a leading advocate of the Catholic bishops' economic letter takes note:

Not everyone is doing poorly in today's economy.

[September 26, 1986]

Nashville Banner

Proof that not even 10,000 Baptist ministers, well-armed and dug-in, can prevent invasion from liberals of the New Age:

In trying to find their own place in today's world, some women are looking back beyond the time of the Jewish and Christian male God to the goddess concept of early mythology, a Nashville feminist theologian said.

"Many scholars now are interested in going back and studying the change in the views about the goddess," said Margaret Meggs, who has developed and taught courses in feminist theology. She prefers to use the Greek feminine term "the*a*logy." . . .

Raised in the United Methodist Church, she now attends the Unitarian Universalist Church . . . .

[October 7, 1986]

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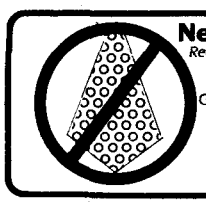

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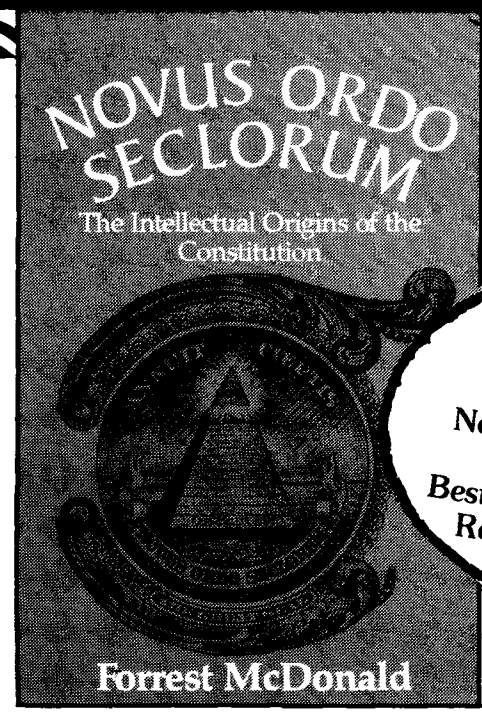

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